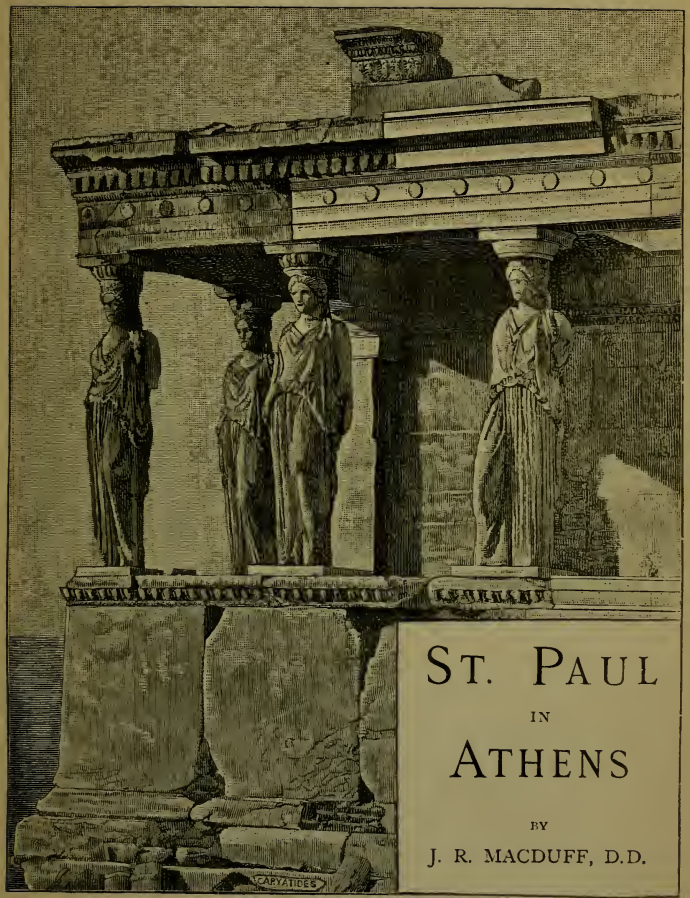
St. Paul in Athens

To
John Stirton
from
J M Scott
March 1895

The Rev J. M. Scott M.A.
was an University
college friend of mine.
He was minister of St
John's parish church,
Perth. He died recently
in 1932. J Stirton

THE PARTHENON—AS IT IS.



ST. PAUL
IN
ATHENS

BY

J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

LONDON
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ST. PAUL IN ATHENS.

THE CITY AND THE DISCOURSE.

BY

J. R. MACDUFF, D.D.

AUTHOR OF

"ST. PAUL IN ROME," "PROPHET OF FIRE," "RIPPLES IN THE TWILIGHT,"
ETC. ETC.

"Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
. . . . . .
Gods bereavèd, gods belated,
With your purples rent asunder!
Gods discrowned and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder!
Not a sound the silence thrills
Of the everlasting hills:
Pan, Pan is dead.
. . . . . .
Sing God's truth out, fair and full,
And secure *His* 'BEAUTIFUL'—
Let Pan be dead."

Mrs. Barrett Browning.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.
MDCCCLXXXVII.

TO

The Memory of

J. WARRINGTON WOOD,

SCULPTOR, ROME:

MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. LUKE, ETC.:

TO WHOM

ATHENS

WAS EVER A SACRED AND INSPIRING WORD:

This Volume

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS GENIUS,

AND IN TOKEN OF A VALUED FRIENDSHIP,

IS

Inscribed.

OB. DECEMBER 26, 1886.

Preface.

THIS Volume is intended to be as much secular as sacred, and as much sacred as secular.

The writer's purpose, as the title indicates, is to give a Monograph on ATHENS; but Athens, in connection with its one scriptural episode and association,—the memorable visit of the Great Apostle of the Gentiles, and his Discourse on its Areopagus. In the fulfilment of a long-cherished purpose—though in many respects differing in plan and treatment, it is designed to form a companion to what was published many years ago, after a personal sojourn in the 'City of the Cæsars'—"ST. PAUL IN ROME."

The theme of the present Volume is twofold. 'Athens and St. Paul' would probably be a name more strictly accurate as regards the order of sequence:—the account of the Great *City* taking precedence of the Great *Discourse:* but the other title is retained, as more in harmony with that of the preceding Work just referred to. It will, moreover, be seen that the local descriptions and the Apostolic visit to which these are the settings, are not treated separately, but are largely interblended.

By some it may be deemed that a disproportionate space and place have been assigned, in

the earlier chapters, to topography and art. The writer can only claim the indulgence of indulgent readers, if he has allowed one of the sunniest memories of life and travel, and a fascinating and congenial subject, to occupy more detail than might otherwise be justified. At the same time he cherishes the hope, that the ample delineations there given, may help to lend an interest to the four topics which follow, and into which the Apostolic Address seems naturally to divide itself. These latter, be it understood, written under the inspiration, or at all events the remembrance of Athenian Areopagus and Attic sky, are purposely not cast in the usual conventional Sermon-mould. They were neither so composed nor so designed; and, as such, would have been incongruous with the rest of the Volume. He ventures no further apology for this—what may be called its hybrid character. To secure completeness such treatment was unavoidable. To have severed the two would have wrested the picture from the frame, or the frame from the picture. If, however, to change the metaphor, dual chords, he hopes at least that there is preserved a concerted harmony.

Further :—it was an observation he has somewhere seen of Dr. Arnold of Rugby (the quotation is from memory)—that a *desideratum* in the present day, is not so much directly religious books, as books with a religious tendency. Though this may be accepted with qualifications, he will be glad, if in the scope and character of what follows, he has been able, so far at least, to follow the suggestion of that master spirit of his age.

Obligations are in their place acknowledged to many works of Historians, Antiquarians, Travellers, Theologians : and in many instances, instead of giving their statements at second-hand, it has been thought preferable to let them speak for themselves. To one ancient Author he owes, in common with other writers on the same theme, a specific reference. The Itinerary of Pausanias —(adverted to also in pages 12 and 13, with note,) —has yielded very abundant stores to explorers of Athens as it was in the beginning of our era. It is not to be wondered at, that a mine so rich in accurate information, derived from personal travel and observation, should have been diligently ransacked by most modern Biographers of St. Paul,

as well as by historical and art writers. If, however, others, so diverse as Flaxman in his Lectures on Sculpture, Colonel Leake, in the admirable opening chapters of his "Topography," Mr. Lewin, and Howson and Conybeare, have utilised his pages, this can be no valid reason for our dispensing with what may be called the invaluable aid of this old Traveller and Archæologist.[1] No treatment—not the very best—of an Apostolic incident in itself unique, can be exhaustive, or preclude many fresh side-lights to vivify it and enhance its value. It will be sufficient reward to the present writer, if he can substantiate, in any humble way, a claim to these; and if he has been thus enabled more fully to illustrate (or, using a modern term—*photograph*) one of the most memorable portions of sacred story.

[1] The best testimony, indeed, to the value of the "*Hellados Periēgēsis*" of the trustworthy Lydian, is the conspicuous place his volume or volumes occupy in the British Museum Library. Page after page of the Catalogue, to those who care to consult them, will be found filled with Editions, from that in the original Greek to the translation of Jahn, used and valued recently by the two English Princes during their stay at Athens, as recorded in the graphic pages of the "Cruise of the Bacchante." There is a good English translation, also, with notes, in three volumes, published by Priestley in 1824.

*** Generally speaking, material that is of secondary and subordinate value is relegated to footnotes, which on that account are passed over and seldom read. May a better fate be claimed for a few of importance and interest in this Volume, which are only placed where they are, so as not unduly to cumber the text.

The woodcuts of the Frontispiece and Title-page are from excellent photographs brought by the Author from Athens. Raphael's great picture has been adapted as the initial heading of this preface : but, (perhaps with doubtful liberty) freed from the impossible Temples which crowd and mar the background in the cartoon of the Prince of Painters. There has been substituted the truer outline of the Acropolis as it must have appeared in St. Paul's time ; while leaving intact the noble grouping of the figures on the Areopagus.

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Part I.

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE.

I.

Introductory.

"We, at Athens, are lovers of the beautiful."—*Pericles.*

"That city which was the envy and wonder of the world."—*Demades.*

"There still survive to her everlasting possessions. On the one hand the memory of her exploits: on the other the splendour of the monuments consecrated in former days."—*Demosthenes.*

"Rome ranks as the third: Athens and Jerusalem as the other two. The three people of God's election: two for things temporal and one for things eternal."—*Dr. Arnold.*

INTRODUCTORY.

We had recently been on the track of other Biblical scenes and memories. A few days before, while sailing among the Isles of the Archipelago, a distant view of Patmos was obtained, with its serrated outlines and undying associations. An appropriate sequel to this was a visit to the ruins of Ephesus, identified with the labours and sojournings of more than one Apostle;—perhaps its predominating remembrance that of being the home, in later years, of the Beloved Disciple; his grave most probably somewhere among the thickets of Mount Prion. Now we were approaching a city which, in its one New Testament allusion, belongs exclusively to St. Paul. His route hither from the north had been along the coast of the Island of Eubœa, doubling Cape Colonna—the historic promontory of Sunium—"Sunium's marble steep," at the entrance to the Saronic Gulph. Sunium, which had long been familiarised by the drawings of Turner and the Grecian Williams, was, in our

case, passed in the dark; but an opportunity was given on the return voyage of seeing the remarkable eminence, crowned with the twelve Doric columns in picturesque ruin, of the Temple of Minerva, in front of which Plato, with a glorious prospect before him, was wont to discourse to his disciples on the mysteries of mind and matter. It is truly a befitting outpost to these classic shores —the "Beautiful Gate" of the Attic Temple. In its original perfection, it must have been an object, alike for guidance and welcome, as dear to the Greek mariner, as the first sight of the southern cliffs of England are to our own.[1]

That morning hour cannot soon be forgotten, when, after skirting the southern slopes of Hymettus, which for some distance had intercepted the inland view on our right, the unmistakable grey Acropolis presented itself on its bold rock, at a distance of seven or eight miles. It was as impressive as ever, with all the hoar of antiquity around it; lacking chiefly what, while Athens was in her glory, must have formed to all voyagers a prominent feature, and one which, lingering on to St. Paul's time, could not fail to arrest him and his companions—the colossal statue of Minerva Promachus, "The Minerva of bronze,"

[1] The pillars of the temple give the Cape its modern name, "Colonna."

as it was termed; tutelary goddess of the city, keeping watch and ward over the priceless treasures at her side.[1] The Island of Salamis was in front.

Forgetting for a moment the havoc which intervening ages have wrought, let us at once transport ourselves in imagination, eighteen centuries ago, and follow the footsteps of the Great Apostle. "As we near the entrance," is a graphic description of his arrival in the harbour, "the land rises and conceals all the plain. Idlers come down upon the rocks to watch the coming vessel. The sailors are all on the alert. Suddenly an opening is revealed; and a sharp turn of the helm brings the ship in between two moles, on which towers are erected. We are in smooth water, and anchor is cast in seven fathoms in the basin of the Piræus."[2] We cannot be far wrong in supposing that it was some time in early autumn, when, passing through this, its seaward gate, St. Paul made his way to the city of Pericles and Themistocles, Socrates and Plato. Athens, it

[1] *Promachus* (πρόμαχος). Her spear and helmet were made from the brazen shields taken at the battle of Marathon; and though thirty-five miles distant, the point of the spear and crest of the helmet were said to be visible in rounding the Cape. The statue of the reputed goddess survived Paul's visit more than three centuries, as in A.D. 395 "it was said to have scared away Alaric when he came to sack the Acropolis."—See Dr. Smith's "History of Greece," p. 396.

[2] Howson and Conybeare's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul," vol. i. p. 374.

must be remembered, was not in his day the Athens of these great men. She was in her prime and glory five hundred years before; "a distance of time," as a writer observes, "as wide as that which separates us from the Plantagenets." Her glory had culminated, alike politically, and intellectually. She had been superseded by Corinth as the true capital of the province and seat of the government. Two centuries had placed her under the iron foot of imperial ubiquitous Rome. The latter, however, was too magnanimous to forget the debt she and her subject kingdoms owed to the "Mother of Arts and Eloquence." To a considerable extent she safeguarded and conserved the walls, temples, and other public buildings, of her illustrious rival: although not a few statues were deemed a fair subject of spoliation and pillage, for the adornment of the Capitol, Forum, and the Palaces of the Palatine. The Eagles of the Empire, as is well known, were unscrupulous as to where they winged their flight and planted their talons. But, while the Cæsars would tolerate no competitor in arms, they ungrudgingly conceded to Athens superiority in other realms. Augustus made her a free city of the Empire in the province of Achaia, allowing her to retain her independence, and recognising her as the great "Art-

shop" of the world. Although therefore fallen from her pristine splendour, and in other ways deteriorating and deteriorated, we must not think of the chief city of the Hellenes, on the occasion of Paul's visit, as having abnegated all that had made her for centuries distinguished. Her golden age had passed, but her silver one remained. She was more than the mere effete and passive trustee of art-treasures.[1] Even her philosophic schools, of which we shall hereafter speak, still lingered, and indeed survived for some centuries later. "The physical might of Rome," it has been well said, "had subdued Greece; but the mind of Greece had mastered Rome. The Greeks became the teachers of their conquerors. The deities of Greece were incorporated into the national faith of Rome. Greek literature became the education of the Roman youth. Greek philosophy was almost the only philosophy the Roman knew. Rome adopted Grecian arts, and was insensibly moulded by contact with Grecian life. So that the world in name and government was Roman, but in feeling and civilisation Greek." [2]

[1] In an article in our leading journal on the most recent valuable discovery of statues in the Acropolis, the writer—evidently an authority on art—mentions, that in the first century, corresponding with St. Paul's visit, "the technical skill of the Attic sculptors was hardly less than in its prime." —*The Times*, Feb. 25, 1886.

[2] F. W. Robertson's Sermons. First Series, p. 199.

The long walls of Themistocles, extending in double line 550 feet apart, erected centuries before, covered a distance of five miles, from the sea to the city.[1] A singular mural avenue this must have been, altogether occupying a place of its own, among the world's capitals. In relation to Athens these walls are likened, by one of the old Greek writers, to a ship with two cables. "Motley and rough-hewn and uncouthly piled, they recalled, age after age, to the traveller, the name of the ablest statesman and the most heroic days of Athens. There, at frequent intervals, would he survey stones wrought in the rude fashion of former times; ornaments borrowed from the antique edifices demolished by the Mede; and frieze and column plucked from dismantled sepulchres; so that even the dead contributed from their tombs to the defence of Athens."[2] This 'Appian Way,' with its side buttresses sixty feet high, had been strengthened all the distance with towers of defence, while here and there, from the Piræus, statues and temples broke the monotony of the line. In St. Paul's time all must have been very dilapidated; in our own hardly traceable.

[1] It is just possible the Apostle may have landed at Phalerum, which was a nearer port to the city, but not the most used; though enjoying also a natural harbour and surrounded with temples and statues.

[2] Lord's Lytton's "Athens," p. 380.

The Apostle's companions from Berea after seeing their honoured charge safely lodged in the city, appear to have taken their departure; probably availing themselves of the return of the coasting vessel to their own northern home. We have this touching entry in one of St. Paul's subsequent letters: "We were left at Athens alone" (1 Thess. iii. 1). It was the first time since his missionary labours began that he could make such an assertion. Some dim conjecture may be formed of what his feelings were, when, in this isolation, a solitary stranger, he paced the streets of the Greek Metropolis. He had no Aquila and Priscilla now, as subsequently at Ephesus, not only to cheer him with their Christian converse, but to relieve and beguile the vacant hours by manual occupation. His experience must have resembled that of a far less noble human agent, who, 900 years before, passed, on a similar lonely unbefriended mission, through the streets of Nineveh (Jonah iii. 4). We know from more than one incident in the Apostle's life, how dependent he was on sympathy; how tenderly he clung to cherished fellowships, and felt the blank of familiar faces and voices. How he valued the refreshing intercourse with Onesiphorus, and followed him with grateful prayers and benedictions! How the spirits

of the jaded prisoner revived at the unexpected welcome accorded him by Roman brethren at Appii Forum and "the Three Taverns!" Who can fail to recall the clinging affection which bound him to his own son in the faith! How the very anticipation of Timothy's coming seemed to erase the furrows from his brow! How his presence made him forget the gloom and the chains of the Mamertine!

Independently altogether of his alleged weakness of sight,[1] we have every reason to infer, that St. Paul's was not by any means what might be called an "æsthetic nature," and therefore he was innocent even of an average appreciation of Hellenic or other art. There are touches, indeed, here and there in his Epistles and in his journeyings, which we may afterwards more especially note, where we can discern that he was far from insensible to the loveliness of that creation he elsewhere speaks of as being unwillingly "made subject to vanity" (Rom. viii. 20). Yet, "the things

I have endeavoured to condense the opinions on this still-debated subject in "The Footsteps of St. Paul," pp. 168–171, and only advert to it here in passing. It would seem, from the fact of being "left *alone* at Athens," and yet evidently not only visiting its places of public resort, but noting the objects around, that the Apostle's sight was not permanently injured. The complaint was not chronic. He might be possibly subject to temporary attacks of ophthalmia, or, it might be, of impaired vision, from which, at other times, as on the present occasion, he was comparatively free.

that are seen" occupied a very subordinate place in comparison with higher affinities and claims. St. John, who came afterwards to describe the glories of the New Jerusalem and its temple visions, would probably have been more at home than he, in the city of Phidias and Praxiteles, although even to him, in another respect, there would be much uncongenial. An Israelite so long familiar with another "Acropolis" which crowned the summit of Mount Moriah, could have viewed that throng of statues and idols with little else than shock or repulsion. The Jew, as we know, was forbidden the use of graven images. With the sole exception of the two-winged cherubim in the most Holy Place, screened from the common gaze, there was not so much as one statue in the Temple and its courts, or amid the streets of Zion. It was the deepest insult which a Roman conqueror could inflict, when, in sacrilegious contravention of a sacred scruple, he dared insist on setting up his own image on the Hill of God. How singular was the contrast in the city Paul was now visiting! In the oft-quoted words of the Roman satirist Petronius, "It was in Athens, easier to find a god than a man." We can readily believe that his succession of solitary walks through its streets and arcades would leave no other impression on his

mind but that of bewilderment. Very similar probably to what would be the case with a Christian peasant from Caithness or Cornwall—who "knows, and knows no more, his Bible true"—when ushered for the first time, alone, into the halls of our British Museum, with its tiers and colonnades of Egyptian, Assyrian, and Roman sculptures. Our Apostle would remember all he saw, only as an unintelligible jumble of sights and objects that had little congeniality with his tastes, and still less with his antecedents. He would be glad when he could, to escape to the free air on the slopes of Hymettus, or the olive woods which bordered the Ilyssus.[1]

As already stated, in the Preface to this Volume, Pausanias, an intelligent and observant traveller—an enthusiastic *connoisseur* in art, himself visited Athens half a century later, in the reign of the Antonines. He has left, in his narration, circumstantial details, which enable us vividly to realise the city of Minerva of the first and second century, and consequently as it appeared at the time of our Apostle's visit. We do not, of course, for a moment entertain the idea, so unlikely, and indeed

[1] We must be allowed, however, to demur to what is regarded as a justifiable inference by some writers, that St. Paul was devoid of 'culture.' The schools of his native Tarsus supplied him with much more than Rabbinical learning. Nor have we any reason to believe that his farther education "at the feet of Gamaliel" was of a narrow and exclusive character.

preposterous, that St. Paul either noted, or cared to note, the succession of objects circumstantially described, and which proved so interesting to this later traveller, with tastes and proclivities very different. It is enough for us, that the cursory inspection and impression, prepared him for the Sermon on Mars' Hill, subsequently to be considered. Its power and beauty, however, and what may be called intrinsic interest, will be all the better appreciated and understood, by making ourselves somewhat minutely familiar with its framework; including some of those very Temples and Statues which formed the text for the Apostle's burning words.[1]

"All along the way," to quote from the Itinerary of our Lydian traveller, as he follows the high road from the Piræus, "are seen the tombs of the most noted men, such as Menander, the son of Diopethes, and the empty sepulchre of Euripides" (i. p. 4). . . . "On entering into the city, there is an edifice raised for the sake of those processions which take place sometimes once a year, and at others in un-

[1] For reasons already stated, I have only availed myself in a partial way of these painstaking descriptions of Pausanias. The Itinerary embraced other countries besides Greece, and is in ten books. The work of "the Syrian Sophist," as Galen calls him, while thoroughly reliable, is written in an intricate style, and much too diffuse and prolix. But, as one of his translators remarks, "It will doubtless be ever considered as an invaluable treasure of Greek and Roman antiquities."

certain periods of time. Near to this is the Temple of Ceres, in which the statue of the goddess herself, of her daughter Proserpine, and of Iacchus (Bacchus) holding a torch, are contained. Moreover, it is signified on the Wall, in Attic letters, that all these are the works of Praxiteles. Not far from this temple is the statue of Neptune hurling his spear at the giant Polybotes" (Paus., vol. i. chap. ii.) He proceeds minutely to describe a series of Porches reaching from the Gates to the Ceramicus, adorned with "brazen images" of those who have rendered themselves illustrious. Passing statues of Minerva and Apollo, Mercury and the Muses, on his left rose the Pynx, the place of public assembly, "with its *bema* cut from the solid rock, guarded by a statue of Jupiter and the Nymphs of the Demus." The rough stone pedestal (*pulpitum*) survives to this day the ravages of time, and seems still to echo with the voices of

> "Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
> Wielded at will that fierce democratie."[1]

Pursuing the road under rows of plane trees planted by Cimon, he enumerates the statues of

[1] "The Pynx included an area of more than 12,000 yards, and could with ease contain the entire free civic population of Athens."—*Stuart's Antiquities*, p. 137—a volume procured by the writer at Athens, and which formed a valuable and reliable guide.—*Illustrated. Bohn, London.*

Conon and his son Timotheus; of Epaminondas and other historical personages: for the evidences of ancient polytheism are intermingled with tributes to ancient heroes, orators, and philosophers. Bronze figures are backed with paintings of famous battles or sieges. Some sculptures are seen in *alto* and *bas relief;* others, though more rarely (protected from weather and plunderers), are fashioned of ivory and inlaid with precious metals. With memories all its own, he mentions the statue of Demosthenes. Could Paul, as he traversed the same route, fail to be arrested by a name which, alike in the schools of his own city and in that of Gamaliel, could hardly fail to be familiar; a name identified then as now with the loftiest flights of oratory which, in the lines of Milton, just quoted, stirred the pulses of Greece in her palmiest days. Here was the massive form raised close to the spot which had listened to the living tones.[1] Then follow other statues of sovereigns in the realms alike of action and thought. Miltiades and Themistocles, Philip of Macedon and his greater son; while in front of a conspicuous portico, on which, in glowing pigment, along with figures of deified heroes,

[1] Lord Brougham pronounces the De Coronâ of Demosthenes "the greatest oration of the greatest of orators."

was delineated the siege of Troy and the battle of Marathon, stood the figure of Solon. If we might farther venture to imagine our Apostle, in the course of his sojourn, straying into one of the adjacent temples, he would have seen what a Jew at least must have regarded with interested surprise, a bronze statue of his own country's high priest, Hyrcanus.[1]

But we need not unnecessarily extend this roll and register of Athenian "art and man's device." Even the decoration of their private dwellings, which fell under the eye of our second century traveller, specially the Atrium or Court-Yard of their houses, bore testimony how deeply rooted image and idol-worship was. The casual gleanings we have given from him and his translators are sufficient to give force and pungency to the indictment of the Apostle:—"HIS SPIRIT WAS

[1] One possible or probable reason for this exceptional introduction by the Athenians of a Jewish statue, may have been the known sympathy which the old Hebrew ecclesiastic had for art and architecture. He lived 180 B.C. Though not belonging to the theme of the present Volume, the incidental remark may be forgiven, that one of the most interesting, and indeed wonderful of recent Palestine explorations, is the discovery of the magnificent palace of this same Hierarch at Arâk-el-Emir on the other side of Jordan, more than a thousand feet above the Ghor, and surrounded with singularly beautiful and park-like scenery, "coombe and valley, and thickest English turf." The account of this palace, with its carvings and monoliths, evidently not unworthy to be named with some of the buildings which crowned the Attic Acropolis, is graphically given in the "Bacchante Cruise" of the two English Princes, vol. ii. p. 639.

STIRRED IN HIM WHEN HE SAW THE CITY FULL OF IDOLS."[1]

"*Full of idols*," for so the original may be more literally and effectively rendered. The Greek word in our English version translated "stirred" [παρωξύνετο] is that from which our word "paroxysm" is taken. It therefore indicates violent emotion; that the spectator was excited—*energised* to indignation.[2] What he beheld was a travestie of true religion—a parody on God. The second commandment of his decalogue could not fail to rise before him with protesting voice; and the image and accents of ANOTHER, "on the way to Damascus," would deepen and intensify that recoil of spirit. "Yea, what indignation . . . yea, what revenge!" (2 Cor. vii. 11). It was, let it be fearlessly asserted, no antagonism to Art, as such; but it was Art prostituted and debased, that roused St. Paul's feelings now from their depth. His own Pentateuch must have told him in his oft perusal of it, how the Jehovah of Israel had consecrated Art in the Desert of the Wandering, through

[1] Κατείδωλον. "We learn from Pliny that there still remained after Nero's spoliation 3000 statues at Athens."—*Col. Leake*, vol. i. p. 24.

[2] In the R.V. it is rendered "provoked." It is the same word that is used with regard to an unhappy memory (Acts xv. 39) describing the keenness of feeling (R.V. "sharp contention") which separated the Apostle from his fellow-delegate Barnabas.

the work of Aholiab and Bezaleel (Exod. xxxviii. 22). While the gorgeous pile of structures in his ancestral Temple in Jerusalem, with its porches and colonnades and roofs, its altars of brass and of gold, had arrested the eye of the Great Master Himself, and evoked from His lips a touching dirge of lamentation (Luke xix. 41–44). But the graving and embroidery—the "cunning work" of these artists of the Hebrew Tabernacle, whether in gold, silver and brass; or in blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen, and the later glories of Mount Zion, were very different in purpose and execution from those marble and bronze incarnations, many of which ministered as incentives to vile passion. They seemed to reflect a silent scorn on the Moral Code proclaimed amid the thunderings of Sinai; and which was enforced and intensified by Him, who came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it. The first chapter of Romans, the Apostle's own subsequent deliberate verdict, reveals the too truthful, debasing picture; and vindicates the justice and vehemence of his present denunciation. "He saw," in the remark of Lechler, "that all this majesty and beauty had placed itself between man and his Creator, and bound him faster to his gods which were no gods." In a word, enough, and more than enough, was seen to convince him, that

the city in which he now wandered, a downcast stranger, was alike by the tenet of the philosopher and the chisel of the sculptor, the home and haunt of what was displeasing to the Jehovah of his fathers, and dishonouring to his once crucified but now exalted and glorified Master.

But he remembers his great mission and vocation. He is there not to shed sentimental tears, or merely utter a silent protest within his own bosom. The cry from Europe to Asia, "Come over and help us," still prolongs its echoes. Though only too conscious of his own weakness, and of the formidable nature of the conflict, he resolves, moral hero that he was, to do battle for God and His Christ.

II.

The Agora.

"That very Athens of ours does not delight me so much by the magnificent works and exquisite arts of the ancients, as by the remembrance of the chiefest men ; where one was wont to dwell, where to sit, where to argue."—*Atticus' Letter to Cicero.*

"The beauty and softness of the climate, heightened by the colour of the atmosphere, and refreshed by the breezes of the neighbouring sea, naturally allured the inhabitants of Athens to pass much of their time in the open air."—*Athens and Attica*, p. 51.

"Oh that Paul could have met Socrates in the market-place, and that Plato could have written the dialogue!"—*Lewin's St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 268.

THE AGORA.

As was invariably the case with St. Paul, both on previous and subsequent occasions, he commenced his ministerial labours by addressing his own countrymen, in their synagogue, along with "the devout persons" (v. 17), the Gentile proselytes —proselytes of the gate. "To the Jew first," was one of the 'marching orders' to which he scrupulously adhered—proclaiming to his brethren according to the flesh the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, their promised Messiah.

But the present visit was not on a Hebrew mission. He had come to the great centre of polished paganism (though the citizens would have resented the name), to measure weapons with their wise men and philosophers, the lovers of culture and learned leisure, the votaries of a brilliant and fascinating superstition. He knew too well, as observed in last chapter, that the sensuous and the sensual was often veiled under the name of art, and degenerated into a deification of vice.

He will strive to expose—if he can, to exorcise—what is "earthly, sensual, devilish," and substitute in their place spiritual realities. Above all, fairer than the fairest personifications of their Pentelican marble, to reveal the only true "theophany;" to exalt the only supreme Ideal of beauty and moral excellence in the Person of a Crucified Redeemer. Socrates had, some centuries before, strolled in that same Agora, and gathered listeners to his side as he descanted on knowledge, and tried to lift his hearers to a higher than heathen platform. The aspiration of his greater successor was to bring some of them around him, with the hope of receiving and welcoming the true "*Pleroma*"—"in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Our glimpse, therefore, of St. Paul in the Jewish synagogue is only a passing one, giving occasion for no remark. The Agora, in all Greek cities, was the centre and focus of life. At the further end of the leading street, in a hollow of the district called Ceramicus, now in a state of nature, where flocks browse, was the ancient Athenian Agora.[1]

[1] Stuart in one of the plates of the "Antiquities of Athens" gives an interesting reproduction of what is now generally accepted as the entrance or Gate of the Agora. He leaves it indeterminate, however, whether this may have belonged to what was called the new Agora; although, more probably, the one now before us.

It must not be confounded, as the name would naturally suggest, with an ordinary market, such as we are familiar with at the Rialto of Venice, or the more prosaic ones at Bologna or Paris; in other words, an open space, innocent of all architectural feature or attraction, surrounded with wooden stalls for vending purposes, and littered with garbage. It was so undoubtedly to a certain extent. In one portion, booths were to be seen occupied by salesmen purveying common articles of clothing and consumption, as well as bazaars for those of luxury. Other parts would be more suggestive of our own Covent Garden; shops for flowers and fruit; vegetables and oranges from the surrounding gardens; oil from the olive groves on the slopes of Lycabettus;[1] honey from Hymettus; even fish from the shores of Salamis and Eubœa. Mingling somewhat incongruously with these, we have the mention of stalls for books and parchments; a clothes booth; a depôt for stolen goods; and the slave-market called "Cyclus." It was, in this respect, a convenient trading centre for the surrounding city. But its main features and use were very different. Architecturally it

[1] There is an inscription found on one of the remains preserving an edict of the Emperor Hadrian, "regulating the sale of oils and duties payable on these."—*Stuart*, p. 19.

must have been impressive. It is described by a writer as a "natural amphitheatre." It had become the fashionable lounge and resort of the learned, keen, quick-witted, scholars and rhetoricians. Such a place of public resort was by no means a peculiarity of European towns or capitals. The most sacred city of the world, Jerusalem, had its 'Acropolis' (the Naos or shrine of its Temple) surrounded by what was known as the Court of the Gentiles. This has been appropriately called by an able authority on the topography of Palestine, "the public park to Jerusalem, where the people met, conversed, and even bought and sold those articles required for the proper observance of festivals. . . . The eastern cloister was called 'Solomon's Porch,' and in it, as St. John tells us, our Lord was accustomed to walk, and doubtless to teach after the manner, outwardly at least, of the Stoic philosophers of Greece" (John x. 24; viii. 20). The same writer refers to the cloistered courts, almost as large as that of Jerusalem, surrounding the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra; the Temple of Rimmon at Damascus encompassed with similar colonnades; and recesses and chambers around the main gigantic Temple at Baalbek: in each case "suitable for purposes of teaching, for discussions on religious and political subjects, and

for popular assemblies."[1] Conspicuous, as is well known, in the centre of the Forum of Rome was the *Milliarium Aureum*—the Golden Milestone—from which radiated the great highways of the kingdom. It was the same in the Athenian Agora. There, was the Altar of the Twelve Gods, from which emanated, in varied directions, the streets of the city and the roads of Attica. Here, in one place, was the "Stoa Basileios," "the Royal Porch," dedicated to Aurora; here, in another, is a Stoa dedicated to Zeus, with paintings of various deities by the artist Euphranor. These and similar ornamental buildings rose at all events on two sides, one of which was confronted with the Statues of the Ten Heroes. Xenophon tells us, that, at certain festivals, it was customary for the knights to make the circuit of the Agora on horseback, beginning at the statue of Hermes, and paying homage to the statues and temples around.[2] We have just mentioned the Roman Forum. What it was to the capital of the Cæsars (though of course in a humbler degree) the Agora was to Athens. Various other and perhaps more accurate parallels may occur to the reader. It must in some respects have resembled the Square

[1] Professor Porter's "Jerusalem and Bethlehem," pp. 59, 60.
[2] Art. "Athens," Encyclopædia Brit.

of St. Mark in the City of the Adriatic; in others, that in front of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. Or, to adopt another simile, its "porticoes and cloisters, decorated with paintings and statuary, were like the Campo Santo at Pisa."[1] While, in the buzz of talk, whether of sedate consultation or clever repartee, it might more forcibly suggest, only under the open sky of heaven, embracing too a wider constituency and more varied themes, the Westminster Hall in bygone years, of our own southern, or the Parliament House of our northern kingdom. That garrulous throng of the ancient capital was composed of masters and pupils, artists, poets, historians, supplemented by a still livelier contingent of gossip-mongers and idlers of every kind which gathered under alcove and colonnade to converse on "burning questions."[2] Moreover, anterior to the art of printing, and

[1] Howson and Conybeare, i. p. 379. Not only the central position, but the decorated character—in architecture and sculpture—seems to have been characteristic of all ancient cities east and west. Take one, as an example recently described—the transjordanic city of Geresa, one of the cities of the Decapolis, "the most perfect Roman city left above ground." Here, in front of a great temple, a flight of steps conduct "down immediately into what was the market-place, an open oval, encircled by an Ionic colonnade, from the farther end of which leads off the centre street of columns."

[2] "There were at Athens places called λεσχαί, *i.e.*, gossiping-houses (corresponding to our coffee-houses), devoted to the reception of persons who met together to hear and tell news."—*Bloomfield, Recens. Synop.*, quoted by Dr. Kitto.

when journalistic literature, whether at the English fireside or city club, was a future revelation, it formed the only means and opportunity of thus obtaining and discussing the politics of the hour. Even the varied colour, blending and contrasted in this Babel of confusion, must have been striking and picturesque, if the dress of the modern Greek, as we have seen it (male and female) is a survival of classic ages. Then, it is specially noted in our narrative chapter, that the Agora opened its gates, not to natives only, but to "*strangers*" (v. 21). Athens would seem to have attracted to it travellers from other lands, just as the more accessible cities of Italy—Rome, Florence, Venice, with their art-treasures and historic memories—are visited now. We can think therefore of 'excursionists' and merchants, either in pursuit of pleasure or of gain or both combined, from other towns and capitals near and distant. Noisy traffickers from Corinth and Thessalonica, Ephesus and Smyrna, Antioch and Damascus; sailors and voyagers from the Alexandrian vessel or Roman galley at anchor in the Piræus. Here and there a Jew with sandalled feet, his long robe girdled round the waist and fringed with blue ribbon. Here and there some soldiers from the barracks—now on foot, now mounted—the flash of their helmets mingling with

the red and yellow mantles of the market-women, or with the still rarer keffêih and fillets of the swarthy children of the Arabian or Syrian deserts.[1] What a rare "symposium;" what a singular friction and whirlpool of thought in this "tumultuous Agora!" We need not wonder that the one conspicuous failure in his art by the great painter Parrhasius was the attempt to personate, in one bold ideal figure, the character of the Athenians. "Nor," says an interesting writer, "was the failure wonderful. To paint chaos"—he might have rather said a malström—"is no easy achievement."[2]

The representative of some new philosophical system was sure of an interested hearing and welcome from that volatile race, who, in our chapter are said, along with "strangers" (possibly youth sent from other cities and countries to the university,—the Oxford or Cambridge of the day), "to spend their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing" (verse 21)—*Lit.*,

[1] The late Lord Carnarvon's picture of the modern Athens, in his "Athens and the Morea," is in thorough harmony with the old. "Of such materials is Athenian society composed. The settler, the enterprising traveller, the missionary, the German, the Greek of the new democratic, and the Greek of the old feudal school, are simultaneously brought together on the narrow but varied stage." P. 40.

[2] Rev. J. Brown-Patterson's Essay on "The National Character of the Athenians."

"some newer thing;" "the latest news."[1] Old topics and opinions, with these restless, spasmodic natures, gradually became stale and effete. Nothing rejoiced them more than to have some novel theory to combat. St. Luke's expression seems to echo the almost identical words of Demosthenes himself, who in better days had denounced this same curiosity, when grave political perils were impending. Instead of rising with the occasion and preparing strenuously to encounter the foe, "they inquire," says he, "in the place of public resort—*If there be any news?*" If the bone of contention was a theological one, some new religious creed to dissect or analyse, so much the better. Sacred themes with such unscrupulous idlers and newsmongers were made subjects for banter and ridicule as much as for discussion. In nothing, however, as we may well suppose, was there a greater jealousy, than for any outsider to attempt interference with the accepted religious system—"a setter forth of strange gods." Yet, with singular inconsistency, as just remarked, they never were indisposed to enter the lists with aggressors. They had, moreover, a liberality of

[1] See New Testament Commentary for English Readers. "You excel in suffering yourselves to be deceived with *novelty of speech*" (Thucyd. 3. 38).

their own, there being no unwillingness to receive into the Attic Pantheon the reputed deities of other countries.

If an auditory could thus readily be extemporised, why need the Christian missionary wait the promised arrival of his coadjutors? Why not at once attempt to make a breach in the enemies' citadel? He cannot restrain himself. It is the enthusiasm of consecrated humanity. Silas and Timothy, knowing as they do the temperament of their heroic leader, will not wonder, when they arrive, to hear that he has gone single-handed into the fight.

There were four conspicuous sects of philosophers dominant in the city of Minerva. Two of these—the disciples of Plato and Aristotle, do not at present concern us. Paul does not appear to have come in contact with them; very probably because of their more secluded habits—keeping religiously, like mediæval monks, within their cloistered gardens of the Academy and Lyceum.[1]

[1] The site of the latter adjoins the now waterless channel of the Ilissus, and the still surviving fountain of Callirrhœ. It was a statue of the Lycian Apollo, which had given its name to this philosophic retreat of the peripatetics. Too true is the description of what it is now:—"Not a flower was to be seen on the banks of the river, that went lazily murmuring by, save the lavender spray of the fragrant *agnus castus*—an humble substitute for the delicate heliotrope that once grew wild there—a plant consecrated to Plato, as the only flower mentioned by him."—(*Lady Strangford's Western Turkey*, vol. ii. p. 358).

The view of the noble ruins of the Temple of Olympian Jupiter (colossal Corinthian), seen from this, is peculiarly impressive.

It was different with the other two—the disciples of Epicurus and Zeno. Conspicuous in the motley assemblage of the Agora, were the representatives of these: and they do not seem to have been slow or reluctant in "encountering" the propounder of new doctrines. A few sentences throwing light on the Apostle's future discourse, may be needful to define their leading tenets. For a somewhat metaphysical digression, I must claim the reader's indulgence.

The Epicureans constituted the atheists and materialists of their age. They denied the existence of God as Creator. The world according to them, following the theory of Democritus, was made of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms (in which the gods of Olympus had no concern), and abandoned to blind chance. Proceeding on the principle, or *dictum*, that "out of nothing nothing could be made," they held the pre-existence of matter from all eternity. Of course "providential government," or any supreme connection with the affairs of men, was altogether discarded. They entertained as unsatisfactory ideas of the nature of man as of the constitution of the universe. In their psychological creed, the soul shared the materialism of the body and was consigned at death to annihilation; or rather, both were dispersed

to mingle with the elements. They held that FEAR, and especially the fear of death, was the one haunt and terror of existence, and they got rid of it by the brief syllogism—"Where we are, death is not. Where death is, we are not. It is nothing then to the dead or the living." A subsequent sentence of Paul, in one of his letters, too truthfully describes their position—a philosophy of despair—"without God and without hope." Their ethics were not more inspiring. Self-love was made the spring of all actions. Their cardinal virtue is prudence; and pleasure, in its proteus shapes is the highest human pursuit. "Happiness consisted in the greatest aggregate of pleasurable emotions." The degrading sentiment which came to shape and regulate their lives was the familiar aphorism—"Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." The self-denial and self-abnegation of the Gospel were altogether repudiated in this existence of self-gratification. Duty was a word unknown. Their motive and rule of action was not what is right, but what is expedient. They tolerated the popular mythology—no more. Any deities who from mere complaisance they acknowledged were little else than fantasies—devout imaginations. Or if some among them conceded the idea of anthropomorphism, these gods and

goddesses were at best regarded as beings in human shape who took no cognisance either of sorrow or of sin: who had no interest in human affairs, but spent their time in dreamy untroubled indolence, thereby sanctioning their own luxurious ease. It is only fair, however, to add, that these are the later phases and developments of the Epicurean philosophy and its tenets, as they existed in the age of St. Paul. Epicurus himself—the Founder of the Sect 400 years previously, would appear, as has often proved the case in kindred societies, to have soared in a serener moral region than his degenerate successors. Gifted by nature, his life was one of truthfulness, generosity, and patriotism. The site of his gardens is now lost, so that we cannot identify his home as we can do that of Plato, Aristotle, or Zeno. He would seem to have had one among other pure and elevating tastes, in being a lover of nature and the beautiful in nature. He made a special bequest of these garden haunts, wherever they were, to his followers, who came to be known as "the Philosophers of the Garden:" and we cannot wonder that the father of the school, the leading tenet of whose system was, that pleasure is the *summum bonum*, should have revelled in the languid enjoyment of flowers and sunshine, amid

the marble forms of beauty which studded them, and sought in such regions of serene tranquillity his chief Eden. The motto he placed on the gate indicated as rigid frugality and simplicity of life, as characterised the followers of St. Francis and St. Bruno in after ages. He was faithful in inculcating culture and contentment, in opposition to what was impure and gross, however low his successors had sunk from his comparatively pure ideal. But although the founder held that virtue was the only road to true pleasure, and inseparable from it, alas—the name "Epicurean" came at last to be rather an equivalent for 'the voluptuary' and voluptuousness—an incarnation of selfishness—one who surrendered himself without scruple to licence. Horace, himself a follower of the sect, expounds faithfully their creed, in the following translated lines :—

"Strive not, the morrow's chance to know,
But count whate'er the fates bestow,
As given thee for thy gain."

. . . . . .

"Ee'n as we speak our life glides by :
Enjoy the moments as they fly,
Nor trust the far off day."[1]

The Stoics, who occupy a similar conspicuous

[1] Od i. 9, 11, quoted by Dean Plumptre in his New Testament Commentary. The best exposition of the ancient "Epicurean philosophy" is derived from the remarkable poem of Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura.*

place in our narrative chapter, were founded by Zeno, a Cyprian, also four centuries preceding the Christian era. They may be credited with a better, though still erroneous creed, which had many distinguished names among its upholders and exponents. They affirmed their belief in two general principles, God and matter, both of which they held to be eternal. They thus recognised one Supreme 'entity,' Creator, Governor, and Sustainer of the Universe. To use their own singular figure and comparison, "the deity pervades the matter of the world in the same way as honey fills the comb of a hive." They also acknowledged a subordinate agency of spirits (demons), who came into contact with the human race. They farther asserted belief in the immortality of the soul, at all events its subsistence after the death of the body. But their notions regarding the character of a future state were dim and distorted. The soul would survive, but it would lose separate consciousness and be absorbed in the "Infinite Essence." Their pride led to the rejection of the doctrine of future retribution, as well as of the need of present repentance. The souls of the wise and the good alone survived the death of the body. All souls were an emanation from this impersonal God, and were at last re-absorbed in the

deity, losing sense of pain and personal identity. On this re-absorption, new cycles would begin, in every respect similar to those which preceded.[1] We have said an "Impersonal God," for His nature and essence they elsewhere likened to fire latent in the component parts of the world. These "Philosophers of the Porch" were therefore virtually Pantheists. The Creator was merely the Spirit of the universe He had formed. The world was deity, spontaneously evolving all things from itself and again assimilating and appropriating them. God, in other words, was the world, and the world was God. It need hardly be added that they were fatalists; that Destiny—Necessity—were the only regulators in the affairs of men, and that the distant inaccessible Being they so far recognised, was Himself subject to the same inexorable fate. Thus they denied alike the personality of God and the responsibility of man. It was a stern unlovable system, with a scornful, haughty superiority to pleasure or pain. The sect has coined the phrase a "stoical indifference." It was their effort to attain possession of a perfect serenity and equanimity; to regard with unruffled contempt the troubles and vexations of life. Hence they refused and rejected

[1] See Neander, p. 188.

the dogmas of any other creed, lest this calm might be disturbed. Their aspiration after mental tranquillity was a parody on the words of the Christ of Nazareth—"Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They submitted even to tortures with inflexible endurance: asserting that to them pleasure was no pleasure and pain no pain. We need not wonder, under the sway of such dogmas, that their fathers and founders, Zeno and Cleanthes, committed suicide. Moreover, it is only natural that the Romans with their martial ways and affinities, the stern enduring qualities of the imperial nation, would have greater sympathy with these men of "blood and iron" than with the languid sentiment of the Epicureans. Hence we find among their adherents more than one illustrious name in the Empire of the Cæsars. As a brilliant writer expresses it, there were, even in the decline of the Empire, loftier minds, adherents to this system, who "stood out protesting against the corruption." With them "belief in the superiority of right to enjoyment, grand contempt for pleasure, sublime defiances of pain, tolled out the dying agonies of the iron kingdom; worthy of the heart of steel which beat beneath the Roman's robe. This was Stoicism: the Grecian philosophy which took deepest root, as might have been expected, in

the soil of Roman thought.[1] From all that has been said, it will be gathered that the Stoical system of Ethics was purer than those of the rival sect; but, independent of other errors, we have seen it was disfigured by pride and vain-glory. If the Epicureans might be compared to the Sadducees of the Hebrew nation, the Stoics, in their haughty self-righteousness, might not be inappropriately designated philosophic Pharisees. How very antagonistic all their tenets to those of the Disciple of another faith now about to confront them, whose life-motto was, "By the grace of God I am what I am!"[2]

The Stoics had their headquarters, the modern "Club" or "Royal Institution," also in the Agora. The Stoa (Στοὰ) was one of the most conspicuous

[1] Rev. F. W. Robertson's Sermons, i. 216.

[2] I cannot resist appending the account of their doctrines thus eloquently summarised by an able friend. "They endeavoured to surmount matter by spiritualising it. They said this universe, which we have been accustomed to regard only as an assemblage of shadows, is in truth a great reality; the shadows are all on the surface, but there is a life beneath them, eternal, immortal and invisible. The material world is the embodiment of an infinite soul, and in the breath of that soul it lives and moves and has its being. Individual forms indeed are perishable and worthy to perish: they seek to preserve an isolated, self-contained existence, and therefore it is only fitting their existence should vanish with themselves. But beneath these forms there is a life which never dies, which outlasts all material changes, and abides through all outward transformations. Let the individual man yield himself up to this life; let him sacrifice his petty interest to enrich the wealth of universal being; let him forget his own pains and tears and misfortunes in the sense of his unity with the great

buildings in the market-place. It gave its name to the sect, as here Zeno first opened his celebrated school. It was specially distinguished for its Pœcile, or painted cloister: a spacious colonnade, underneath which (recalling the gallery of battles at Versailles) was depicted a series of the great fights which had won for Athens and Greece their place in the world's history. Some of the Homeric scenes were thus translated for the eye. The battle of Marathon was conspicuous among heroic memories. In addition to these paintings, there were suspended on its walls the brazen shields of the Scionæ of Thrace; also similar trophies taken from the Lacedemonians. We may only further remark, that with neither Epicureans nor Stoics was

Spirit of nature, which holds his frail existence only as a drop is held by the mighty ocean."—*Dr. Matheson's "Growth of the Spirit of Christianity,"* vol. i. pp. 49, 50. Perhaps the noblest and purest adherent of the sect in its waning existence, was one wearing the imperial purple,—Marcus Aurelius: "the head of all non-Christian moralists," as he has been well described by a distinguished man of letters (see *Contemporary Review*, 1886, p. 247). He adopted the system at the early age of twelve years, and resolutely adhered to it alike as a pupil and a teacher, sitting at the feet of its worthiest exponents, after he had himself attained the highest honours of the state. He pursued his philosophic studies even when engaged in war, and absorbed in the distractions of rule. In his case, philosophy and philanthropy were identical, and his life was a protest against pride, selfishness, and impurity. He was a loyal follower of its older distinguished adherents, such as Seneca and Epictetus. A Biblical Commentator, from whom we have already quoted, mentions, that "many of the Stoics were sought after as tutors for the sons of noble families, and occupied a position of influence, not unlike that of Jesuit confessors and directors in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries."

Paul unfamiliar. Disciples and followers of both sects were to be found in considerable numbers in the schools of Tarsus, which had attained now great celebrity. Perhaps, in this their haunt and headquarters, he was enabled more acutely to feel and accentuate their wide opposition to the creed it was his glory to expound and defend. What could be more antagonistic to the later developments of the Epicurean system, than the doctrines of that divine Saviour in their irreconcileable hostility alike to sensualism and selfishness, and in their definition of true happiness as consisting in the enjoyment and favour of a personal God? What could be more opposed, on the other hand, than the later phases of the Stoical creed, to the humble, lowly, doctrines of the Cross of Calvary?—doctrines in which the axe was laid at the root of all self-love and creature merit; whose foundation-truth was that of human depravity and human helplessness, dependence on divine superhuman aid; eternal life, not the reward of virtue or goodness, but "the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23).[1]

[1] In what has been said of these two philosophic sects, it is by no means to be supposed that their doctrines and tenets were the most dangerous among the Greek speculatists. Many others not only were avowed atheists and scoffers, but the votaries of shameless immorality. We would desire to give emphasis to a previous remark, that the aim and endeavour, ori-

To resume the thread of our narrative. The members of these two sects would seem, on the occasion of St. Paul's visit to the Agora, to have preponderated among the other notable frequenters of this great rendezvous of Grecian thought.

It would appear too from the text-narrative, that not on one isolated occasion only did our Apostle mingle with the promiscuous assemblage. For we read (ver. 17) that "he disputed in the market *daily* with them that met him." His new theme—constantly on his lips—that which his preliminary statements led up to, was "*Jesus and the Resurrection.*" Morning after morning, he may have gathered varied and varying groups around him in Stoa, Colonnade, or Porch. And while numbering more astute listeners—(as in the case of a Diviner than he)—"the common people"—the ordinary crowd of plebeian loungers may have "heard him gladly." "He did not," says Dr. Alexander, "ostentatiously throw down the gauntlet to the chiefs of the great philosophic schools, which then divided the allegiance of Greece, but was content to speak with any one who was

ginally at least, of the Epicureans and Stoics, was to settle the foundations of virtue and to satisfy the yearnings of the human spirit in its search for the "highest good." Both schools professed to teach "the more excellent way," according to their light and leading, and to find some loftier and more enduring principles for the guidance of man's moral nature.

willing to hear what he had to say." There was nothing, indeed, to prepossess in the stranger's appearance. These children of Hellas, a nation of athletes—models of physical grace—who prided themselves as much on the perfect development of mere outward form as on intellectual distinction, would see before them one of mean stature; his face wan with recent suffering and bonds, and specially the stripes and stocks of Philippi; his garb ragged, his speech, if idiomatically correct, lacking in the rich mellow musical tones to which they were wont to listen. If he had to apologise to the less cultured Corinthians for his stammering and imperfect utterance (1 Cor. ii. 1–5), what must these shortcomings have been to more fastidious and delicate ears? Over and above must have been manifest traces of inner anxiety which could not be concealed. Yet the man was greater than his personality. There was, to use a modern coined word—a mesmeric power in his tones which dispensed with other accessories. Like the Tishbite of another age and country, the God he owned had "made his words, *fire*." Those Greeks who had for long reverenced Socrates, despite of his repelling physiognomy, would not overlook or undervalue mental qualities though enshrined in a mean casket. Above all, would

they respect boldness combined with sincerity. There was an earnestness of conviction—a heroic bearing—which could not fail to enlist their sympathetic attention. He had taken to himself the whole spiritual armour of which in after times he wrote; and "above all" (over all) "the shield of faith." He got at once into living touch with the minds around him; going from one group to another of those who were standing under the porticos, or sauntering under the plane trees. "He exhibits to us," says Monod, "notwithstanding an infirm body and a feeble speech, what a man can do, even one single man, when his will is in harmony with the will of God." Possibly when the above leaders of thought had noted this sympathetic interest on the part of the auditory—they may, like the captain of the temple and the chief priests, on another occasion, at Jerusalem, have dreaded "whereunto this might grow" (Acts v. 24). What he was urging was no mere modification of their own polytheism, but an entirely new departure. The novel doctrines might prove infectious, and gain perilous mastery with fickle ears. They must come to the rescue. "What does this babbler say?" (ver. 18)—was their haughty comment and query, as they advanced within hearing. The word "babbler"—will be

found commented on by most exegetical scholars. It means literally a "bird pecker;" a rook; or as others say, a bird of the finch tribe, with a shrill note, chirping and nibbling up scattered seeds on the public way, or following the plough, or as here in the Agora. From this, its root derivation, it comes figuratively to apply to an impecunious haunter of the market-place who earns his precarious living, first by pilfering floral and other gifts left on the altars of the gods,—one who thus tries, by dishonourable ways and means worthy of contempt, to secure what he fails to get by honest trade; then (a still farther emblematic meaning)—it may refer, as in the present instance, to one who is regarded as a prattler—a loquacious idler—whose mind is a prey to crude incoherent fancies; or, more contemptible still, one who picks up and circulates scraps of knowledge he does not understand. The rendering of the verse in Wycliffe's Version is—"What will this sower of wordis say?" In the Rheims Version, "What is it that this word-sower would say?"[1] Olshausen notes, that "in the very place in Athens where St. Paul spoke, Demosthenes, too, called his opponent Æschenes—a 'Spermologos.'"[2]

[1] Quoted by Dr. Kitto. See also Howson in note, p. 400.
[2] Olshausen on the Acts, vol. iv. p. 551, note.

The suspicions of the Sophists seem gradually confirmed. They whisper to one another or protest aloud—"He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods" (v. 18). He is claiming our homage for unrecognised deities (*δαιμονια*), and is therefore a violator of our laws. They proceed to specify the two new divinities he sought not only to include in their Pantheon, but to supersede those they had sworn to reverence;—(*Ἰησοῦς. Ἀνάστασις*). "JESUS," a Jewish divinity:—also a female deity *Anastasis*, "THE RESURRECTION," embodying the idea of immortality. This had been the pith and kernel of all these daily and repeated colloquies—the one supreme subject of thought and appeal—things in heaven and earth that were never dreamt of in their philosophy. "*Jesus and the Resurrection*"! —the two themes permeated and dominated the teaching of the Great Apostle.

We are quite aware as to how this construction of the meaning of St. Paul's words on the part of the Epicureans and Stoics—a meaning first suggested by Chrysostom and followed latterly by several German writers, has been doubted and combated. It is by no means to be pressed. But the opinion of the Great Father of the Eastern Church seems to have much to recommend it. All around were statues of gods and goddesses, who

were the embodiment and personification of abstract notions and qualities,—such as Honour, Energy, Modesty, Fame, Persuasion, Concord, &c.[1] Why should not *Anastasis* have suggested itself in the same light?[2]

In that hurricane of noise and clamour—a chronic surging of talk—it occurs to these members of the two sects that they would enjoy greater quiet and freedom for the discussion of the new creed, and the claims of these alien divinities for a place among the immortals, if they were to adjourn with the Hebrew Stranger to the neighbouring eminence.[3]

This we shall leave for description in next chapter.

[1] We may add the observation from Pausanias:—"In the market-place of the Athenians, there are other works which are not so obvious to every one, and among the rest an altar of Pity (or Mercy, Ἔλεος), which Divinity, as she is above all others beneficial to human life, . . . is reverenced by the Athenians" (vol. i. chap. xvii.).

[2] Among these German authorities are Lange, Baumgarten, and Baur. Dr. Gloag in his "Commentary on the Acts" well remarks, that if it had not been the writer's intention to designate these two as strange gods proclaimed by St. Paul, there would have been no reason for the addition of τὴν ἀνάστασιν. If it had only been Jesus whom the Apostle preached as "the Risen One" the historian would have added the pronoun αὐτοῦ. But he does not write "Jesus and *His* Resurrection," but "Jesus and *the* Resurrection" (vol. ii. p. 150).

[3] V. 19. "They took him" (took hold of him by the hand). There is nothing implied in the words to suggest violence or "arrest." "The same verb is used often of taking by the hand to aid or protect (Mark viii. 23; Acts xxiii. 19, ix. 27). It was prompted by curiosity—not displeasure. (*Professor Lumby of Cambridge on the Acts, in loc.*)

III.

The Areopagus.

"It was the Greek who, transcending every difficulty of action and posture, liberated the figure from the stone, and impersonated strength and grace in those petrifactions of heroes and of gods, which are at once the glory and the despair of each successive generation."—*Holmden*, "*Art in Greece.*"

"It is impossible to conceive of anything more adapted to the circumstances of time and place, than is the whole of St. Paul's masterly address; but the full force and energy and boldness of the Apostle's language can be duly felt only when one has stood upon the spot."—*Dr. Robinson's Biblical Researches*, vol. i. p. 8.

"It can hardly be deemed profane, if we trace to the same divine Providence, the preservation of the very imagery which surrounded the speaker,—not only the sea and the mountains and the sky, which change not with the decay of nations—but even the very Temples, which remain, after wars and revolutions, on their ancient pedestals, in astonishing perfection. We are thus provided with a practical, yet truthful commentary on the words that were spoken once for all at Athens; and Art and Nature have been commissioned from above to enframe the portrait of that Apostle, who stands for ever on the Areopagus as the Teacher of the Gentiles."—*Howson and Conybeare*, vol. i. p. 410.

"All these things have been, are, ought to be, and will be used, and perhaps increasingly, as handmaids of the Church's ministry, and for the innocent delight of the intelligent. Only they do not make Heaven, or reveal God."—*Bishop Thorold.*

"God . . . dwelleth not in Temples made with hands" (Acts xvii. 24).

THE AREOPAGUS.

The Areopagus, (*Αρειος Πάγος*)—Mars' Hill—was so called from the Temple dedicated to the God of War, which stood by itself close by: just as the "*Campus Martius*" had been dedicated to him in Rome. Others assert that it obtained its designation from being the spot where, according to tradition, the reputed gods were summoned to a solemn assembly, when Mars was arraigned for the murder of a son of Poseidon (or Neptune). It had been long appropriated for judicial purposes: and, as already noted, Athens, being constituted by Rome a free city, still had its recognised and independent courts of judicature. The Court of the Areopagus was the most venerable of these. It was instituted by Solon as a check to repress the disorders of the democracy, and was composed of the choicest and most conspicuous of the citizens,—those of noble birth and blameless reputation—the true "Leaders of the people." Indeed, to secure it being select, none were advanced to the office who had not

previously held that of Archon. During its best days it was distinguished for probity, justice, and unimpeachable rectitude. Possibly it may have now degenerated from the time when its decisions were deemed so reliable, that even the Roman did not scruple to make its members arbiters in difficult cases, or counsellors in important affairs.[1] The Court took cognisance of capital offences, and had exclusive jurisdiction, too, in the settlement of religious matters (*τὰ ἱερά*). All innovators, those departing from the traditional and accepted religious rites and customs—what we would have called "Schismatics"—were sisted at its bar. It was therefore specially appropriate, on this occasion, for hearing an exposition of the Christian Apologist's doctrines. Owing to these and other associations, there was, in the mind of the Athenians, a halo of sacredness thrown around the place; corresponding in some measure to that which invested The Shiloh of Israel's Tabernacle. But as it was mingled too with a superstitious awe, shall we call it rather, and more truthfully, the prototype of the hierarchal council and conclave so formidable in Mediæval times—the Romish Inquisition. Some conjecture that the Court was now in session. Be this as it may, it

[1] Dr Kitto.

is evident that our Apostle was not summoned before it as a criminal, on a criminal charge. His appearance there was extra judicial. No formal indictment was presented. It had been very different with others before, who, in their way, were as illustrious as St. Paul himself. The noblest of all the noble citizens of Athens—the founder of her Ethical Schools, with whose name we are already familiar—the great and good Socrates—when he had reached the age of three score and ten[1]—had been arraigned where the Apostle of a purer faith was about to stand. He had to answer to almost the identical accusation—viz., that he had been "the setter forth of strange gods." These were the very words of the capital charge—"He did not acknowledge the gods whom the city acknowledged, and he introduced new gods.[2] He concluded his famous appeal, or apology, almost in Apostolic words—"Ye men of Athens, I am obliged to you and thank you, but I must obey God rather than you. . . . And now the hour is come for us to depart. I go to death and you to life, but which of the twain is the better choice is known to God alone."[3] He was thirty days in prison previous to his death. These he spent in

[1] B.C. 399. [2] Xen. Apolog. Soc.
[3] See Lewin's Life of St. Paul, vol. i. p. 288.

philosophic converse with his friends.[1] The cup of hemlock drank in the adjoining prison was the cruel and ignoble cause of the termination of a life which belongs to all ages.[2]

The Areopagus itself was remarkable. It consisted of an eminence, or rather protuberance—an insulated rock, more craggy towards the east, where it attained the height of fifty feet. Here was the reputed Cave of the Furies, the awful goddesses with their snaky tresses who dogged the footsteps of guilt. They are called, by Hesiod, Erinnyes (the Avengers), but, on being propitiated, became Eumenides (the Gentle Ones). Their abode was a natural hollow or grotto, in the north-eastern base of the rock confronting the Acropolis. To the

[1] Dr. William Smith's History of Greece *in loc.*

[2] From "verbal photographs" left us by the most distinguished of his contemporaries, and specially by Plato, we can picture the figure and appearance of the living man, which hardly needs the aid of bust or statue to impress upon us his individuality, so unlike the symmetrical forms and features of those among whom he carried on his ceaseless mission: the rotund head and capacious forehead—the un-Grecian nose—the prominent eyes with their kindly glance when argument woke them up from their normal inexpressiveness; the restlessness of a true peripatetic; one so well adapted, in what are familiarly known as his "Methods," to encourage dialectics and discussion among a capricious auditory. We can imagine him, all day long, strolling, but never alone: now along the public walks and gardens; now in the gymnasia for the training of athletes; now in the bazaars and booths of the Agora—specially his favourite Stoa Poecile: now expounding his thesis on the heights of the Areopagus; now sauntering with his more familiar intimates among the statues and Temples of the Acropolis—or amid the oleanders of the Academy.

Temple of the Semnæ, or Subterranean Sanctuary, the accused before the Areopagite Court were conducted after acquittal, to offer sacrifice.[1] Religion was thus invoked to enforce the sanctions and penalties of Law; a foreshadow of the association of Church and State of after ages. The behests of the earthly Council were confirmed and sanctioned by the proximity of this haunt of the "Avenging Angels" of Greek mythology, and the supposed entrance to Hades.[2] The "Hill" is approached by sixteen stone steps from The Agora—the same by which we ascended on the occasion of our visit, as they still survive in a dilapidated state. Mr. Bartlett well describes the spot:—"A long rugged slope culminating to a point. . . . At the top of the steps and hewn in the rock is a level platform with a stone bench around it, steps, bench, and all, picturesquely corroded by the tooth of time." The two English Princes in their "Walks about Athens" give this graphic touch in the reference to the Areopagus. "The

[1] Pausanias mentions three statues there, as being seen in his day—those of Pluto, Mercury, and the Earth.—i. chap. 28.

[2] Not aware of the vicinity of the cave, we did not examine it. Dr. Wordsworth, who did so, says—"There is a wide long chasm formed by split rocks, through which we enter a gloomy recess. There is a fountain of very dark water. A female peasant whom we find here with her pitcher, in the very adytum of the Eumenides, says that the source flows during the summer, and that it is esteemed for its medicinal virtues" (p. 66).

wild thyme and dry odorous grasses now cover this hill, amongst which we came across the descendants of the grasshoppers of which the old Athenians were so fond."[1] The place had very old and less pleasing historic memories; for it was here that the Persians under Xerxes had, centuries before, taken up their position to assault the Acropolis, then the "citadel," poorly fortified with wooden bulwarks. The assailants sent showers of arrows, furnished or "headed" with burning tow, which easily accomplished their mission on the timber barricades. The Athenians of that heroic age, however, surrendered their lives and forts only after prodigies of valour. When other resistance was hopeless, masses of stone were rolled down on the attacking soldiers. The disparity of numbers determined the fate of the day, and the defenders were put to the sword. But Salamis was at hand.[2]

[1] The same, in their account of the remarkable ruins of Jerâsh or Geresa, note the similar juxtaposition of temple and law-court to which in the previous page we have referred. Speaking of the Great Temple of the Sun. "We enter first the Basilica, which stands immediately opposite to this, on the right hand side of the street. The tribune of Justice, where was placed the "gabbatha," the piece of tesselated pavement brought from Rome, is well marked, and on this stood the chair of the judge." It is added, as true of the Areopagus as of these Oriental ruins of their "Palace of Justice,"—"The swallows to-day are now chirping where lawyers once pleaded," vol. ii. p. 652. One or two of these ancient stone benches of the Areopagus have been removed outside the modern museum of Athens—the Temple of Theseus.

[2] The Student's Greece, p. 205.

It was up these same stone steps, then, that the Apostle of Christ was now conducted by his curious interlocutors. The privileged judges, what were called "the Upper Council" would occupy, facing the south, their triangular stone benches; most probably Dionysius, spoken of at the close of the narrative, among them. The remaining crowd of philosophers would stand on the vacant space in the platform, or grouped on the rocks around.[1] Doubtless St. Paul would be placed on what was familiarly known by the name "Stone of Impudence."[2] As indifferent would he be, as was the illustrious Athenian we have spoken of, to any implied contumely. He has no thought but an irresistible desire to unfold his great message.

The idea of danger or indeed insult is at once dismissed and negatived by the terms of the invita-

[1] We may here once more refer to the Initial Woodcut in our Preface, where, in conjunction with an ideal picture of the surroundings, we have, though in inadequate size, a reproduction of what the authoress of "Sacred and Legendary Art" pronounces, "the sublimest ideal of embodied eloquence that ever was expressed in art" (p. 226). Mr. Bartlett has an effective engraving, though an altogether different treatment of the same scene, in his "Footsteps of the Apostles" (p. 106). "There is no spot," he adds, "about the identity of which there can be less doubt than this, and in none, perhaps, is so little effort required, to figure the minutest details of the incident connected with it" (p. 105).

[2] Ἀναιδείας, "Two stones upon which the accusers and defenders stood. They call one of these the Stone of Reproach (or contumely) and the other of Impudence" (*Pausanias*, chap. i. 28). What in modern phrase would be the places for Plaintiff and Defendant, the accuser and accused.

tion addressed to the stranger by these masters in the art of courtesy. Though they deemed him and had already denounced him as a "seed-pecking babbler," a frivolous innocent, they at all events veiled the cynicism which may have mingled with their assumed politeness. "May we know, if you please," said these inquisitive interrogators, "what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? for thou bringest strange things to our ears. We would know therefore, what these things mean?" (v. 19, 20).

One salient reference at least, in the sermon, justifies our pausing here for a little to describe the view from the summit of this rocky knoll, the same prospect which must have met the eye of the Apostle. What the author of "Athens and Attica" has said of the Pynx, might, so far at least, with appropriateness be transferred to Mars' Hill. "From its position and its openness, it supplied the Athenian orator with sources of eloquence influencing himself, and with objects of appeal acting on his audience which no other place of a similar import, not even the Roman Forum, has ever paralleled in number and influence" (p. 55). It would matter not in which direction he first gazed, for the entire panorama, striking now, must have been doubly impressive, teeming with varied interest, in that first century of our era, before

the havoc of time and the ravages of conquering hordes had invaded its sanctity. He might begin with glimpses of the somewhat unpicturesque heights and sombre dells of "flowery Hymettus" on his left. Turning towards the right was the Piræus, partially screened by the Pynx, but probably not sufficient to hide out one of the spurs of Mount Ægalios rising from the Attic shore, the spot where Xerxes (who had so recently, as already noted, converted the Areopagus into a place of assault) sat on a canopied throne upon the rocks, still memorialised by "a larger heap of stones,"[1] to watch the armaments at the great naval fight, and from which he sprang in a paroxysm of fury at the unparalleled disaster.[2] The gulph of Salamis, with its Island, and Straits, and "white wings of commerce," was backed by the coast of Peloponnesus. The distant mountain-range, tinted with what a traveller calls "their forget-me-not blue," indicated the direction of the city of Corinth. Continuing the circuit, the plain of the Cephisus

[1] Memoir of Lieutenant De Lisle, p. 86.

[2] The vivid description of Lord Byron may here be recalled:

"A King sat on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships by thousands lay below;
And men in nations;—all were his!
He counted them at break of day;
And when the sun set, where were they?"

would stretch in "middle distance:" not as now bared, blighted, treeless, and comparatively bereft of busy life, but studded with gardens and olive groves.[1] Conspicuous among these would be the old Academic haunts of Plato.[2] Still to the right would be seen the barrier hills of Attica—the mountain line of Parnes. But boldly conspicuous beyond all others as an outlier—a great watch-tower over the city of Pericles of a singular cone shape—was the remarkable hill of Lycabettus. It occupies the same relation to Athens, that the Mount of Olives does to Jerusalem. Bishop Wordsworth is reminded by it of what Monte

[1] It must be borne in mind that the soil of Attica was by no means exuberant—not included among the world's favoured regions for fertility. But in its brightest era it showed the powers of cultivation:—what art and human labour could achieve in subjugating the adverse forces of nature. The serenity of its atmosphere and the beauty of its skies were always the same. "Preller regards Athene" (*αἰθήρ* the clear height of air) "as originally a personification of the wonderful beauty and brilliance of the stainless sky in Hellas."—*Nineteenth Century*, January 1886, p. 53. The first two of the well-known lines are at all events true to this day—

> "Still are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild,
> Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields."

[2] These may be about three Roman miles distant from the Areopagus. They are gardens surrounded and interspersed partially still with groves, among which the Cephisus winds its way to the Saronic gulph. Other travellers tell us that Milton's tuneful nightingale—"the Attic Bird" still survives with the warblings which of old gladdened this school and home of Plato, "the plane tree whispering to the elm as Aristophanes has it." Our impressions of the place, it must be confessed, were more prosaic. But besides the visit being necessarily a hurried and superficial one—allowance must be made for the depressing influences of a hot sun and dusty roads—the latter telling with fatal effect on the environing trees, especially the oleanders.

Mario is to Rome (p. 46). A nearer parallel is one with which we are more familiar. Not so picturesque as the Lion *couchant* which, in Arthur's Seat, guards the city of Edinburgh—(for this and other reasons so appropriately called the 'Modern Athens'), but it is loftier and more precipitous, and has, what is an impossibility in our sterner north, olives, myrtles and cypresses clothing its sides. The more distant mountain sweep is completed by the hills in the direction of Marathon: a wonderful "interlacing," as it has been well described, "of land and sea." Possibly the same writer's words, conveying his own impression of the scene, may be appropriate to the Apostle spectator:—"The exquisite softness and beauty of the colouring, especially when the evening sun, glinting over the conical tops of Cithæron . . . encircles as with a halo of fire the brow of Lycabettus, and bathes the sides of Hymettus in a flood of rosy light. The more distant mountains then assume that deep rich purple hue peculiar to the Levant, making them stand out from the glowing background of the evening sky."[1] All travellers must be struck with this brilliancy of light and colour. "The epithet 'violet-crowned' refers to the hills which shut in like a crown the whole plain. . . .

[1] Professor Porter.

The glow over these hills of Attica is more delicate than the equally clear but warmer tinge we have lately been used to in Syria and in the Valley of the Nile; and in addition, there is this indescribable violet hue, which not only when the sun is setting, but also for two or three hours previously, bathes Pentelicus, Parnes, Lycabettus, and Hymettus."

But above all, then, as now, was the peerless, unrivalled Acropolis, 200 yards distant, enthroned on its rock, and towering to the height of 150 feet, with its crown of temples: far more than ever the capitol was to Rome, or, taking a home comparison, their respective castles ever were to Stirling or Edinburgh. "It resembled" says Dr. Wordsworth, adopting the simile of Xenophon, "a decorated pedestal, or a massive altar—one great *Ανάθημα* to the gods." No wonder that Herodotus describes the Immortals themselves contending for it: while another Greek writer appropriately designates it "the heart of Athens, as Athens was the heart of Greece." "Somewhat," says Leigh Maxwell, describing one of the Islands of the Archipelago—"like the High City, or Acropolis of Athens. So it was with the most of the towns and capitals of the different divisions of ancient Greece. Each had its Acropolis, or high rock,

where the treasures of the place were kept, which was in fact, the citadel."[1] "The rock" says the graphic writer of "Rambles in Greece" which of all rocks in the world's history has done most for literature and art—the rock about which poets and orators and architects and historians have ever spoken without exhausting themselves, which is ever new and ever old, ever fresh in its decay, ever perfect in its ruin—ever living in its death."[2] We need hardly add that the *cor cordium* was "the House of the Virgin"—the altogether unique and perfect Parthenon.

If the writer be forgiven, yet another personal allusion. We had only, a fortnight before, visited what—taking them all in all, may be deemed the world's noblest relics of ancient Architecture—the ruined Temples of Baalbec in Cœle Syria. While their colossal size dwarfs comparison with most other rivals, their beauty was enhanced as seen in a sky of unclouded blue. The graceful Corinthian shafts which look as if reared by Titans are "weather-toned" or rather, weather-*stained*, with the drift of red sand blowing upon them from the plain of Bukkâ. This delicate "Etruscan red" almost fading into golden yellow, seen in that turquoise setting and intensified with the last fires

[1] Letters of an Engineer, p. 17. [2] Professor Mahaffy, p. 27.

of day, is grand and impressive, beyond description. No wonder they interfered with a first impression of the Parthenon. But the feeling of disparity was little else than momentary. In magnitude of course there can be no comparison. As well liken the Andes or M. Blanc to Snowdon or Ben Nevis. But when the question of dimension is adjusted—the Parthenon (the Virgin's House) truly called "the Jung-frau of Athenian Monuments" [*Syrian Shrines*] has many claims as a competitor. On the great natural pedestal of the Acropolis there is a cluster of varying and beautiful art of which the Parthenon itself is *Primus inter pares.* It stands on the highest platform, 65 feet in height, frieze, pediment, architrave, plinth and pillar, all in exquisite harmony. Well may this finest specimen of pure Doric, so faultless in its proportions, be called "the highest expression of intellectual beauty." "Ruined, indeed," says Lady Strangford, in her interesting volumes, "yet glorious and beautiful still, like some noble matron who has borne her part through all the prime of life, now fading into the silvery tresses, the bending stoop and the lingering step of age, yet in whom, though the loveliness of youth has vanished, the soul shines forth in pure and holy spiritual beauty." This is

poetically true. But, on the other hand, what must it have been when, not now, as represented in our frontispiece, crumbling and defaced, bereft by British cupidity of its best friezes, which have their unnatural home in our National Museum :—more wanton, wicked, and destructive still, battered with Venetian shells, and Turkish (alas, too with Grecian) cannon ;—but as it glowed in the proud Archaic era ; its snowy crown supported with 46 columns fresh from the marble quarries of Pentelicus. We cannot wonder at the pleasing phantasy of the admiring Athenians, who believed that the atmosphere of Greece, always pure and translucent, formed a special dome or canopy above their priceless edifice :—that "a crown of light hung eternally over the head of the Virgin Citadel." It was built, as is well known, under the fostering patronage of Pericles, aided by the genius of Phidias and Praxiteles :—two sculptors who have had their one successor in Michael Angelo—but only in bold conception, not in exquisite refinement.[1]

[1] There is a shaft of one of the Doric columns to be seen in the 'Athens room' of the British Museum Gallery. The length of the frieze was more than 500 feet "adorned by a representation, in low relief, of the Pan Athenaic procession" (*Stuart's Athens*, p. 51). We perhaps ought not to disturb the above vision of white Parian and Pentelican marble. But many of our readers may be aware that the last "find," already referred to, in the Acropolis, as described in the *Times* of February 25th 1886, abundantly confirms the long-entertained conviction that many of these works of art,

If the Parthenon formed a conspicuous object from the Areopagus, the Propylæa—the great vestibule of the citadel constructed by Mnesicles at a cost of 2012 talents—occupying as it did a nearer point of sight, must have stood out with still greater prominence. Most of our readers probably know that the term "Propylæum," in architecture, refers to the advance or front portion

including architecture (and that too even of the Phidian age) were at least partially *coloured:* not simply to give relief to projections and details, but to produce decided contrasts. It is a revelation at which modern taste naturally revolts. Of the six colossal statues of Parian marble included in that comparatively recent discovery (preserved uninjured alike by the soil and the darkness) the "Meander," (or pattern round the marble crown, with radiating bronze spikes) of one, is unquestionably thus painted, indeed the colours retain their primitive lustre. The fringe of the tunic has similar parallel painted lines: while the exposed parts of the body show the natural marble. Pausanias gives no hint in his description of this colouring. So we may perhaps be warranted in concluding, that in the age of St. Paul, while conceding its employment in some of the existing buildings, it had been dimmed if not altogether removed by the combined influences of time and exposure.

The *chef d'œuvre* of Phidias had its place within the Parthenon in the Cella—the colossal statue of the tutelary goddess of the city composed of ivory and gold: the acknowledged masterpiece—not of Phidias only, but of all art. The robe of the goddess was of beaten gold. In her right hand was a figure of Victory, in her left, a spear: "while her helmet, breast-plate, sandals and girdle, were covered with emblematic figures, and the immense ægis at her side with the battles of Amazons" (*Bethune*). "The statue was of the sort called *Chryselephantine* (Greek words "golden," "of ivory") a kind of work said to have been invented by Phidias. Up to this time, colossal statues, not of bronze, were Acroliths;—that is, having only the face, hands, and feet of marble, the rest being of wood concealed by real drapery. But, in the Statue of Athena, Phidias substituted ivory for marble in those parts which were uncovered, and supplied the place of the real drapery with robes and other ornaments of solid gold" (see Dr. Smith's History of Greece, p. 395). Mr. F. C. Penrose and the late Mr. Ferguson are both well known for their researches, and enthusiastic devotion in connection with Attic and

of a pile of buildings. The Parthenon has been likened by an ancient writer to a crown, and this, equally appropriately, to a frontlet. A broad flight of steps led up to the pillared portico, probably the roadway for festive processions and the return of conquerors.[1] The building is spoken of, in its perfect state, as the admiration of all Greece.

Athenian antiquities. The following from an article in the *Edinburgh Review* gives their joint theories, alike regarding the colour-tone of the interior of the Parthenon and its relation to the famous statue. "In his" (Mr. Penrose's) "view, the hard frosty glare of the Pentelic masses of its interior was subdued by a litho-tint to a sort of moonlight tone, and the environment thus attempered to the softer lustre of the ivory which it enshrined. Mr. Ferguson has made a model of the Parthenon with the figure of Athene therein, lighted from above. The light which is thrown upon the statue is most perfect. It falls chiefly upon the face, neck, and arms, (the ivory parts), and leaves the golden drapery in a softer half-light."—*Review, October* 1886.

There is, among the Athenian remains in the British Museum, a cast of the marble statuette found at Athens—a Roman copy of the above Chryselephantine of Athene Parthenos, by Phidias. Still more interesting is the following description of one special Greek treasure in the Museum of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg. I quote from the *Times*, Oct. 21, 1886. "But some things stand out conspicuously, and among these, pre-eminent is the pair of massive earrings of the fifth century B.C., bearing the head of Athene Parthenos. For their beauty alone they must be placed in the forefront of the collection. The face of the goddess is in the purest style, proud and noble. The treatment of the hair and the ornaments of the head, and the attendant owl, is delicate beyond description; the workmanship is superb. But they possess the added value that they are the nearest approach we know of to a faithful copy of the famous chryselephantine statue of the Parthenon. Except the owl, which the historian-traveller forgot to mention, the whole head, in every detail, agrees with the minute description of Pausanias, and we have thus not only a supreme work of art but a priceless record of one of the most celebrated statues of all antiquity."

[1] An inclined plane in the centre, seemed to have been artfully combined with the steps, so as to admit the triumphal chariots. These, it will be remembered, are introduced in the frieze of the Parthenon as forming part of the "Pan-Athanaic procession" already referred to.

"As the traveller," says Prof. Mahaffy, "stands at the inner Gate of the Propylæa, . . . over his head are the enormous architraves, blocks of marble over 22 feet long, which spanned the gateway from pillar to pillar." [1] Evident traces of colour and gilding corroborate the statement of the preceding note, that in this exquisite fabric the Pentelican marble was not left to its virgin purity, but lavishly embellished with pigment, as fragments of its cornices among our Elgin Marbles too faithfully attest. The structure itself, with its massive iron gates, is thus picturesquely restored to the mind's eye by Bishop Wordsworth: "It seems as if this portal had been spared, in order that our imagination might send through it, as through a triumphal arch, all the glories of Athenian antiquity in visible parade. . . . Let us conceive such a restitution as its surrounding fragments will suggest. . . . Let their moulding be again brilliant with their glowing tints of red and blue; let the coffers of its soffits be again spangled with stars, and the marble antæ be fringed over, as they were once with their delicate embroidery of ivy leaf . . . and then, let the bronze valves of these five gates of the Propylæa be suddenly flung open, and all the splendours of

[1] Rambles in Greece, p. 89.

the interior of the Acropolis burst upon the view."[1] We feel, after all, as if we dare not rashly impugn the taste of the nation which possessed such an innate sense of the beautiful, in these lavish decorations of scarlet, blue, and gold on frieze and cornice. What would have looked harsh, unsightly, conspicuously out of place, in a northern climate, would require, before exception can be taken, to have been seen, standing out boldly in that pellucid atmosphere we have just spoken of, and its background of sapphire.

We must hasten to complete this summary of "the Temples made with hands," which formed subsequently, a chief clause at least, in the text of the Apostle's Great Discourse. The only other noted building in that singular congeries was on the north-western corner, and which indeed must have directly confronted him. It was the beautiful Erectheum (Erectheion) the home of the mystic olive tree of Minerva, with the much-reverenced statue carved in the same wood. On the occasion of the annual festival of what was known as the Lesser Pan-Athenæa, games were celebrated with other competitions; and the visitors' coveted prize was a vessel filled with oil from this consecrated tree. "This," again to quote the same author, "was the original

[1] Athens and Attica, pp. 93, 94.

Minerva of Athens—the Minerva who had contested the soil of Attica with Neptune and had triumphed in the contest. . . . To the Minerva-Polias it was, and not to the Minerva of the Parthenon, that the Pan-Athenai peplus—the embroidered fasti of Athenian glory—was periodically dedicated." This embroidered robe of crocus colour, woven by the maids of the city, was presented with great pomp to the Patron Goddess every fourth year.[1] In the same interior, Pausanias specifies the golden lamp—the masterpiece of Callimachus, which burned night and day—the brazen palm tree rising by its side, the smoke of the lamp wreathing through its fronds: besides other trophies on the surrounding walls.[2] A sacred serpent was said to haunt the Temple: and when the Athenians were fleeing in panic from the

[1] Of all the portions of the Parthenon frieze in the hall of the British Museum, none is of greater interest than the original (not a cast) of this delivery of the Peplos. It is sadly worn and mutilated,—but there is no doubt as to the historical incident represented. As a guide to the Frontispiece of this Volume—the ruins of the Parthenon with its despoiled frieze,—the pediment in the western front of the photograph seems to have represented the starting-point of the procession above alluded to. Here that procession has been supposed to separate into two. The one to the right—the south—"being chiefly occupied with the cavalcade of the Athenian Knights—the northern, with the carrying of Sacred Vessels, and leading of victims for the sacrifice." (*Prof. Mahaffy's Rambles*, p. 96.) These two divisions are farther supposed to have met on the opposite side—the eastern or main front of the Great Temple. Over its gateway were twelve figures of noble mien and proportions, delivering the Peplos into the hands of the presiding hierarch (*Ib.*, p. 96).

[2] See Stuart's Antiquities of Athens, p. 64.

approaching hosts of Xerxes, that panic was said to be increased on the discovery that the serpent had deserted its sanctuary-haunt.[1] When preparing for the great naval fight of Salamis, "the Hippeis or Knights, headed by Cimon the son of Miltiades, marched in procession to the Acropolis to hang up their bridles in the same Temple of Athena, and to exchange them for some consecrated arms more suitable for naval warfare."[2] Nothing amid the Acropolis ruins impressed the writer of these pages so much, as the well-known adjunct to the Ionic Erectheum, and which is partially given in the wood-engraving in our title-page, the once absolutely perfect Caryatidæ—the graceful female figures, three of them restorations—supporting the entablature, and which have since been plagiarised in a hundred forms for modern buildings. "Wait," says an observant traveller, more than once already quoted, "till the full moon—such a moon as the clear atmosphere of Greece can show, has slowly risen above the summit of Hymettus, silvering the purple of the mountain, and gleaming on the side of the Parthenon: . . . go and stand beneath the Caryatides, that still guard the memories of the daughters of Cecrops, and look at the calm, serene smile which

[1] Dr. Smith's History of Greece, p. 203. [2] *Ib.*, p. 203.

Diana lays with her cold finger upon each marble maiden face, and each stately figure."[1] One of the originals, of exceeding interest though the face is mutilated, has also found an alien home in our British Museum.

The Caryatidæ are perhaps more impressive and beautiful now, than they were in the era of which we speak,—as they must then have been dwarfed by the bronze Colossus close by, previously alluded to, of Minerva Promachus, 70 feet high including the pedestal, dominating the entire city: "appearing from her proud eminence to challenge the world in defence of Athens." "The stately and virgin goddess," says Lord Lytton, "towered, the most majestic of the Grecian deities,—embodying in a single form, the very genius, multiform, yet individual as it was of the Grecian people —and becoming, among all the deities of the heathen heaven, what the Athens she protected became upon the earth."[2]

It would be vain to add to this roll-call of heroes, gods and demi-gods,—to wander farther among the statues grouped around,—Mercury, Venus, the Graces, the shrine of Diana wrought by the chisel of Praxiteles. Nothing could be more

[1] Syrian Shrines, vol. ii. p. 350.
[2] Lord Lytton's Athens, its Rise and Fall, p. 40.

prominent from the spot the Apostle occupied than a brazen chariot with four horses on a pedestal opposite the Temple of Victory: while beside it in equally befitting prominence was a figure of Pericles: the Ruler who beyond every other gave to Athens its renown, and bequeathed that renown to succeeding ages. Who, after all this, can challenge the estimate of Pausanias, that "the Acropolis was a thing to wonder at."[1] The very walls which formed its fortifications were utilised for art. Among subjects thereon depicted in groups of statuary by Callimachus, Myron, and others, were the War of the Giants—the battle between the Amazons and the Athenians, the slaughter of the Gauls in Mysia, &c. &c.[2]

But enough. St. Paul had often stood on the slope of the Mount of Olives, traversed by what is now known as the 'Hosanna road,'—and gazed, as his divine Master had done before him, across the Kedron Valley, on the temple and city of his fathers. Deeply impressive too must have been

[1] Heliodorus, surnamed Periegetes, or the Guide, wrote no less than fifteen Books in describing it.

[2] Stuart's Antiquities, p. 15. "Even all the sides and slopes of the Great Rock were honeycombed into sacred grottoes with their altars and their gods, or studded with votive monuments."—*Rambles in Greece*, p. 103. It may not be generally known that even the great Socrates himself was not unrepresented on the Acropolis as a sculptor. His father had trained his son in his own profession. A group of the Three Graces by the hand of the Philosopher was extant in the time of Pausanias.

the sight. But here he had disclosed to him not one, but a forest of Temples, or as it is expressed in the opening narrative "a city full of idols" (v. 16). One feature the two views shared in common, however different their other surroundings,—a feature strange and unfamiliar to western eyes—the wonderful precision of architectural detail belonging to that transparent atmosphere, which makes the chisel marks of the masons and sculptors of the Acropolis as vivid as the carvings and laminæ and bunches of hyssop on the walls of Jerusalem, though the deep Valley is between. How saddening and depressing to such a mind as St. Paul's, was all this brilliant aggregation of art where the only God he owned and worshipped was misapprehended and disowned!—so splendid a tribute borne to the externals and pomp of devotion: a recognition indeed, to a certain extent, of the religious yearning they shared in common with all human souls; "but they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful: but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. i. 21).

We cannot be at all certain whether it had entered at first into the mind of the Apostle to act now on the aggressive, and assail these formidable strongholds. It is quite possible that his

programme, on the contrary, was one of passivity and abstention. He could not fail, as we have already noted, from recent terrible experience, to be shattered in body, and with nerve unstrung to feel unequal for moral and intellectual struggle. But the spectacle which now presented itself—the idol-shrines and dumb marbles of Agora and Acropolis would not permit him to remain in silence. Too well did he know that there is a necessary and inseparable degradation in all idolatry. He is not to be deceived by the thin veneer of religiousness which serves to cover moral debasement. With the few smooth pebbles from the brook of revealed truth, he resolves to confront the giant forces which were defying the armies of the living God. He rises with the occasion. Out of weakness he is made strong. To use the words of one of the best of his biographers, "His heart was hot within him, and while he was musing the fire burned."[1] He had a heroic confidence in the truth and power of his own future inspired utterance—"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen,

[1] Mr. Lewin.

yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. i. 27–29). His prayer might be that of the Psalmist of his nation, "Uphold me with thy free, (or, as it has been rendered) thy Kingly Spirit" (Ps. li. 12). It was an impressive and momentous hour in the history of the Christian faith. The religion founded by the reputed son of a Galilean carpenter, and propagated by some fishermen from its inland sea, was now confronting the dialectic skill of the representatives of the world's boasted wisdom and philosophy. On the Hill consecrated to the name of the God of War, a member of the despised Hebrew race is about to unfurl the banners of the Prince of Peace. Who can tell, but in that promiscuous crowd of talkers may have been some lowly spirit sighing in secret for the rest which poetry, and philosophy, and art were impotent to bestow, and which had already received some dim response, in the buzz of the Agora, from the lips of the Jew of Tarsus?—the Divine Master's words fulfilled—despite of the scornful rejection on the part of others:—"It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. xiii. 11).

It is time, however, that we now proceed to

the Discourse itself. In the first instance we shall give it entire; then venture to add a Paraphrase upon it—presenting its words and arguments in an expanded form. We reserve this for our next chapter.

IV.

The Discourse.

"He carried within him the lively consciousness, that he brought to the central point of Grecian society, an element of life which as infinitely transcended its highest imaginations, as the Eternal went beyond the loveliest scenes of a perishable world, and in this consciousness he moved as a spiritual potentate—as a mature man among a crowd of children to whom he undertook to explain their presentiments, and to express them in words."—*Olshausen on the Acts*, iv. 550.

"It is surely of no slight importance that the history of the first age of Christianity should present us with one undoubted instance of a character, which unites all the freedom and vigour of a Great Reformer, with all the humbleness, and holiness, and self-denial of a great Apostle."—*Dean Stanley's Essays on the Apostolic Age*, p. 173.

"Overpowering at times must have been the thought, that he, a poor earthen vessel, was charged with this ministration of glory: but no less inspiring that Voice behind the Veil in these great cities of the Roman Empire, 'Be not afraid, for I am with thee.'"—*Archdeacon Norris*, p. 92.

"Paul alone, against all Athens."—*Bengel.*

THE DISCOURSE.

(*AN EPITOME AND PARAPHRASE.*)

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone; graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

(*Acts* xvii. 22–31.)

Thus spake St. Paul in the exquisite musical tongue of his auditors. Commencing with the

usual method of direct address—the formula of their own Orators—Demosthenes included—"Ye men of Athens!"

An unfortunate rendering in our authorised version, has altogether marred the point and meaning of the first sentence of his prologue—"I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious."[1] One so wise and skilled, or rather so judicious an interpreter of the human heart, would never have been guilty of the mistake of charging that sensitive throng of citizens with an excess of superstition—an undue attachment to the rites of their religion. Such a sweeping charge would at once have roused their prejudices and passions, and forfeited to the speaker the favoured and favouring opportunity of securing their attention—if not their sympathy and interest. Though no craven, but speaking out of the fulness of his magnanimous heart, the occasion, he too well knew, demanded prudence. These stern censors of the stone seats were not to be trifled with. An incautious, indiscreet word, might have provoked the doom of Socrates. Had he displayed the character of bigot or fanatic:—had he assumed a defiant attitude,—

[1] It is somewhat singular, that the translation should be retained in the English Revised Version. It will be found, however, that among the emendations of the American Committee the preferred rendering is given—"very religious."

had he slighted their holy mysteries or indulged in covert blasphemy against the Gods of Hellas, he would not have been tolerated for a moment. But he evidently combined the art of the practised orator with the more delicate tact of common sense. He became, says Neander, "a heathen to the heathen." He who wrote the Epistle to Philemon could well be trusted in courtesy and conciliation. "When I consider," says the Lord Shaftesbury of a former century, "this Apostle as appearing before the witty Athenians, . . . I see how handsomely he accommodateth himself to the apprehension and temper of those politer people.[1] So far from incurring their censure, he adroitly makes their very idolatries the basis, not of denunciation but of commendation. "Like a skilful tactician," it has been well said, "he seizes the point of unity, before he advances to the marks of difference.[2] The word of the original Greek (δεισιδαίμων) is almost intransferable in our language. It has no exact equivalent in English. Enough to state, that its purport was almost in direct contrast to what our accepted translation conveys. It was the speaker's object, let us repeat, in this *exordium*, to accord to his hearers

[1] Characteristics, vol. i. p. 30.
[2] Growth of the Spirit of Christianity, vol. i. p. 105.

the unmistakable external evidences of their 'religiousness.' The familiar "Si monumentum requiris, circumspice:" might appropriately have fallen from St. Paul's lips as he gazed around on the visible embodiment of these their religious instincts and cravings. "I perceive" (if we may transcribe a few of the suggested paraphrases) "that in all things ye are exceedingly devout"—"devout overmuch"—"To have an exceeding veneration for religion" (*Alford*)—"Scrupulously religious"—"Carrying your religious veneration very far" (*Dr. Porter*)—"Too prone to the abject fear of invisible power" (*Principal Candlish*)—"Carefulness in religion" (*Dean Howson*)—"Much given to the worship of the gods:" "more god-fearing than others"—"Ye are devout above other cities, and scrupulous in your religious rites." Perhaps Dean Plumptre's "devotee," comes as near as any.[1] 'In one sense,' if we may venture to pursue and expand the Apostle's appeal,

[1] The same writer adds—"The Deisidaimôn was a believer in omens. Nikias, the Athenian general, ever oppressed with a sense of the jealousy of the gods, and counterordering the strategic movements, because there was an eclipse of the moon (Thucyd. vii. 50), is a conspicuous instance of the Deisidaimôn, in high places."

Older than any of these authorities just quoted, Chrysostom, not only supports the complimentary allusion; but cites the words in illustration of the Apostle's subsequent exhortation to the Colossians: "Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."—*Norris on the Acts*, p. 87.

'I may well enlist your sympathies, as our aspirations seem so far to be in the same direction. We are at one in yearning after that divine something, mightier than yourselves, you profess to have found in your divinities and idols. Be patient with me, as I endeavour to unfold mysteries, —truths undreamt of in your ethical systems,— themes which your poets have never sung and your sculptors have failed and must ever fail to mould in their plastic art or breathing marble, and which your wisest men who boast of the heaven-descent of their philosophy could never reach. You worship in your own way: but you fail to worship the true God whom I adore. Above all you fail to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.'

He proceeds to the ground on which he bases his indictment. As his divine Master before him, took the water of the well of Samaria[1] or the lighting of the Great Candelabra in the Temple-courts —as emblems of Himself, and illustrators of His doctrine,—"the Well of living water" and "the Light of the world;"—so the Apostle here takes an inscription seen on one of their altars, as the keynote and 'apology' for the statement which follows:—"*As I passed by, and beheld your*

[1] Howson *in loc.*

devotions" (or far better rendered "contemplated your sacred things;—the places and objects of your worship")[1] "*I found an Altar with this inscription*, 'To THE UNKNOWN GOD'" (v. 23).[2]

At what part of the city he had seen this incompleted dedication we are not informed; whether on his way up the long mural avenue from the outer Piræan Gate, or in the course of his subsequent explorations in the streets or gardens. Enough to say that his eye had fallen on some such porphyry or marble pediment; and that the significant *Cryptograph* formed a befitting text for his present discourse.

There have been many opinions and surmises among commentators as to the purport of this singular negative inscription. There is no doubt the preponderance of authorities accept the explanation of Pausanias, that "at Athens there are altars (several) of gods which are called the 'unknown ones.'" Philostratus, who lived a century later, notes the same in his life of Apollonius. Jerome goes farther in his Commentary on Titus i. 12: "The inscription on the altar is not as Paul asserts 'To the Unknown God;' but 'To the

[1] Τὰ *σεβάσματα ὑμῶν*. "This denotes sacred objects in the widest sense of the word. Proper temples and also single altars, or sacred enclosed places."—*Olshausen on Acts* p. 553. Wycliff simply renders it "Your idols."

[2] Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ.

Gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa:—to gods unknown and strange.'" Laertius, a writer, B.C. 600, gives a special narration as to the cause of one of these altars being erected—that Epimenides, on the occasion of a plague, led some white and black sheep to the Areopagus, allowing them to wander at will, but commanding those that followed them to mark the spots where they lay down, and there erect altars and sacrifice to the God to whom the things pertained, *without giving the name:* and thus the pestilence was allayed. Dean Alford refers to a conjecture of Eichhorn that these shrines may have been erected before the use of writing, and thus inscribed in after times. "But," he adds, "I should rather suppose that the above anecdote (of Laertius) furnishes the key to the practice,—that on the occurrence of any remarkable calamity or deliverance not assignable to the conventionally-received agency of any of the received deities, *an Unknown God* was reverenced as their author."[1] The point is, after all, not one of any real importance. The suggestion, however, first made by ancient writers and endorsed by several modern reliable authorities, seems at least far from improbable; that the 'Deus Ignotus' was none other than JEHOVAH, the God of the

[1] Alford's Greek Testament *in loc.*

Hebrews: He who by these Hebrews themselves was designated "the Unknowable"—the "All Hidden," the "Ineffable;" "Dwelling in thick darkness:"—the awful Name they were forbidden, save by a circumlocution, to pronounce.[1] If the name of Jehovah was thus so sacredly safeguarded by His own worshipping people, how otherwise could He be revealed to those outside the bounds of the Holy Land?[2] We know that the Athenians in their too 'idol-loving' ways, were not reluctant to introduce the gods of other nations into their Pantheon. To use the words of Mr. Froude, "A new god was welcomed there as a new scientific subject is welcomed by the Royal Society."[3] St. Jerome specially mentions, in one of his Commentaries, that the divinities belonging to all the countries of the then known world were to be found in Athens. "The Athenians," says Strabo, "are hospitable; as in other respects, so also in respect of the gods, for they have received many foreign religions, for which they were

[1] See Cave's Lives of the Apostles, p. 79, with references to Justin Martyr, Plutarch, Tacitus, &c. Mr. Lewin strongly favours the interpretation: also Professor Dick in his Commentary on the Acts.

[2] "Dion Cassius speaks of the God of the Jews as *αῤῥητον* 'not to be expressed,' and the Emperor Caligula, in his answer to the Jews, calls him *τον ακατονομαστον ὑμιν*, 'Him that may not be named by you,' and Lucan and Trebellius Pollio call him *Incertus Deus*."—*Lewin's St. Paul*, p. 282.

[3] Short Studies on Great Subjects.

ridiculed in the Comedies."[1] Is it probable they would make an exception with respect to the Deity of the remarkable race which included David and Solomon among its sovereigns, and in later ages had resounded with the exploits of the Maccabees, —exploits worthy of mention along with Marathon and Thermopylæ? "They were, besides, not unlikely," remarks Dr. Kitto, "to have set up an altar to Him, at or about the time they gave a statue to His High Priest (Hyrcanus)." We know, moreover, that subsequent to the conquests of Alexander the Great, a strong alliance was formed between Greece and Palestine. The Roman antipathy to the children of Abraham was not so strongly shared by the countrymen of Socrates and Plato. Be this as it may, we think the conjecture gives point and significance to what follows: and although with an array of authorities against the surmise it would be more than presumption to state it otherwise than a possibility, it would seem to furnish the appropriate comment— "*Whom therefore ye ignorantly*—(or, much rather, 'without knowledge' or 'unintelligibly') *worship*, HIM (whom ye worship as the Unknown)—*declare*

[1] Strabo, Geog. x., p. 471, quoted by Dr. Alexander. "Lucian in his Philopatris, uses this form of an oath, 'I swear by the Unknown God at Athens.'" *Quoted by Barnes on Acts.*

I unto you." And the sequel of the speaker's Discourse, constitutes that promised 'declaration.'[1]

Paul was speaking under the blue expanse of heaven. Milton's "sea, air, earth, and sky," were all around and above him—the handiwork of Him he loved and served :—"*God that made the world and all things therein . . . the Lord of Heaven and Earth*" (v. 24). If we may venture to expand his words and their meaning as he thus turns to the pages of Nature's great Lesson-Book :—'You, Epicureans, entertain the belief that this beautiful world, with its manifold evidences

[1] Some recent commentators thus recognise an alliteration between the word on the altar (Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ) and the same word here employed, "Whom (or what) therefore ye worship, *not knowing*, (ἀγνοοῦντες), Him I *do make known to you*," or rather, "I set forth to you:" a play also on the word his disputants employed regarding him,—"*a setter forth* of strange Gods" (καταγγελεὺς) v. 18. He retorts with the same expression, "Him *I set forth*" (καταγέλλω) v. 23.

Since the above paragraphs were written, my attention has been directed to a book now rare, published more than a century ago, by Chevalier Ramsay, called "The Travels of Cyrus." He describes the visit of the Persian monarch to Egypt, where he was spectator of its religious ceremonies in one of the temples. "Before the sacrifices were offered," says the writer to whom I am indebted for the quotation, "the High Priest explained to him the meaning of the mysteries in such language as this :—'We adore,' said he, 'no other but the Great Ammon: that is to say, the Unknown God. We consider him sometimes as he is in himself, and at other times as manifested in nature. In the first sense, we call him Ptha, life, light, and love; all whose operations, thoughts, and affections being concentrated in himself, he remains in solitary unity, incomprehensible to mortals. Thus considered, we adore him only by silence, or by the name of 'Incomprehensible Darkness,' and we represent him by the clouds which you see at the top of the Obelisk.'"—*Crowther's Sun-Worship*, p. 23.

of design and adaptation, was made by a capricious combination of atoms. I come to unfold to you the Personality of the Great, Self-existent, Intelligent Creator:—not as the current mythology of your nation teaches — Gods many and Lords many; divinities dreamingly haunting the solitudes of nature, having no bond of sympathetic interest with the human race,—far apart from all the affairs of men: I come to reveal to you Him in whom we live and move and have our being. The God, moreover, of all the families of the earth. Once my belief was similar to your own, that the Jehovah I serve had no interest beyond the limits of my own nation. Under the influence of a more expansive spirit I have been taught that He is the Living, Loving Father of all the human race; confined within no artificial bounds, but keeping everlasting watch over the universe.'

The passing reference to the outer world, leads to a new topic and one of significant contrast.

Can we not imagine that outstretched hand (the Apostle's familiar attitude) directed now in another direction. Confronting the Speaker, as already minutely described, was the Rock of the Acropolis, its wondrous coronal of so-called sacred architecture,—crowded masses of temple, statue, and shrine — the pardonable pride of the world's

proudest nation. Whatever it might be to others, it was little else in itself to the eye which now surveyed it, but a colossal Altar with the enlarged inscription—"*To Gods Unknown.*" 'The God I serve and love,' continued he[1]—'the Universal Father—the unseen and invisible "*dwelleth not in (such) Temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with the product of men's hands;*" however skilful and cunning the artificer,—however splendid and imposing the ritual, however costly the sacrificial offerings. You have given shape and embodiment, in that Acropolis of yours, to your reputed Gods of Olympus and Helicon. He stands in need of no such sculptured forms, though they be the workmanship of the most distinguished human genius ("*as though He needed anything,*" v. 25).[2] You believe that your presiding deities, to whom you have given ideal shape and beauty, dwell in selfish unloving seclusion, far apart from the wants and necessities of their votaries. My God and Heavenly Father has not only, as Creator, fashioned those mountains which girdle your city and shores,—stretched out the heavens as a curtain

[1] Doubtless the very words he used were suggested and supplied from the dying utterances of the protomartyr Stephen—indelibly impressed on his memory (Acts vii. 48, 49).

[2] "The previous words struck at a false theory of the Temple; these at a false theory of worship."—*Dean Plumptre.*

and given the sea its decree. He has done more. He is infinitely better. He is the Almighty Sustainer,—"*Seeing He giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things*"' (v. 25).

He pursues the theme:—adding a natural corollary; or, as it has been expressed, "after giving them the philosophy of religion, he passes to the philosophy of history." He knows, too well, the haughty self-assertion of the nation whose representatives are now around him. "The Athenians," says Kuinœl, "deemed themselves to be αὐτόχθονες —"Aborigines"—"sprung from the soil." They claimed a special and illustrious pedigree. Their theory was, that each nation had a separate descent, and that each realm and race were under the supervision of separate divinities. Hence the polytheistic system which had its most singular development in the capital of the Hellenes. Paul claims boldly, in contravention alike of ancient and modern theories, the one Adamic descent,—the unity of the wide family of man,—the children of one Almighty Parent,—the brotherhood of humanity. To use the forcible words of Olshausen—"For this reason he made it appear that all tribes were brethren; and that a higher destiny assigned to the nations their dwelling-places and epochs of development. By this last thought the Apostle

indicates that the calamities of nations exhibit no unregulated fluctuation, but a course of things determined by laws from above."[1] 'I concede,' —is the expansion of the Apostle's thought— 'your distinguishing place among the world-kingdoms. You may well look with elation on your heroic struggles for your nation's liberty:—your warriors and statesmen—your artists and craftsmen. But imagine not that you are the one race on earth exclusively favoured with divine protection:—that your land enjoys a favoured monopoly, while the outer world is consigned to a godless fate. You, Epicureans, ignore a God of Providence:—you, Stoics, abandon the world to a dreary fatalism. The Unknown God I declare unto you is Upholder as well as Framer. Do not foster the delusion that you are privileged, by exclusive descent from some fabled progenitors, while the outside world you deem Barbarian is the product and haunt of demons. Whatever be the disparities, physical and intellectual, wrought by time and circumstance, we have one common origin. He whom I have already declared not only gives to all, "*life and breath and all things*" but, v. 26, "*He hath made of one blood*:"—or rather, "He hath caused every nation of men

[1] Commentary on the Acts, vol. iv., p. 354.

(sprung) of one blood,[1] *to dwell on all the face of the earth.*"'

From this, the preacher naturally proceeds to enforce the great moral obligation, resting on God's intelligent creatures, "*to seek the Lord, if*

[1] See Alford's Greek Test. *in loc.* "Every nation." R.V. *παν ἔθνος.* Dean Plumptre notes the reference to "the special gift of character of each race. The Greek sense of beauty and the Roman sense of law. Teutonic truthfulness, Celtic impulsiveness, and Negro docility, have all their special work to do . . . and their special parts to play in the drama of human history."—*New Test. Commentary for English Readers.* "All nations of one blood," seems to contain a covert rebuke at the Hellenic 'pride of race;' to their cruel system of slavery and its large proportions, despite of their boasted refinement.

I have purposely abstained from entering on the speculations of later decades regarding the 'Descent of Man.' These would be altogether out of place in such a volume as this. Let me simply quote, with approval, the following brief but pertinent remarks on the subject by another writer. Dr. Stuart, of Edinburgh, speaking from a Bible and Christian standpoint on the modern theories, pushed to their extremes, of evolution and development, observes:—"Viewed in some of its aspects, the distance may seem little between a man and the dog that follows at his foot. We are both creatures formed by one Maker out of the dust of the same earth; and although not of one blood, we are both born out of flesh and blood, and at death the bodies of both return to the dust. Fascinated by this resemblance, some acute men of science, ignoring man's creation in the Divine image, and his peculiar and completely distinctive capacity for God, and seeking a oneness for man beneath him and not above him, have pored over this earthly likeness till what is heavenliest in their own faculties seems to have been benumbed; and they have pictured to themselves a man near of kin to the other beasts, only little higher, and almost if not quite self-promoted among them. As in its childhood the world by wisdom knew not God, but changed His glory into the image of corruptible things, so again in its old age the world seems ready to relapse into a second childhood, by returning after another fashion to the glorifying of 'four-footed beasts, and birds, and creeping things.' . . . Between man and the wisest beast of the field, there is interposed a chasm, deep and dark, across which millions of years can weave no thoroughfare. But man was created in likeness and for fellowship with God; in that likeness we are renewed; and to that fellowship we are more than restored by Jesus Christ."

haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one ('*each one*' *R.V.*) *of us*" (v. 27). 'I speak, not of what can only be regarded as beautiful myths; your recognised divinities presiding over separate localities and diverse interests:—not of the distinctive gods of mountains, or winds, or rivers, or fire;—not of the deities personating the abstract emotions and passions of the soul—Duty, Patience, Honour, Hope, Pleasure; but the All-Comprehensive—Omnipotent—Omnipresent ONE: "*For in* HIM *we live, and move, and have our being*"' (v. 28).

This great foundation-truth in Christian theology he happily enforces, not from His own Hebrew Scriptures, for these would be valueless in their eyes, but from one of their own literary authorities; a quotation from an astronomical poem called "*Phœnomena*" the work of Aratus (B.C. 278):[1] "*As certain also of your own poets hath said, For we are also his offspring*" (v. 28). From St. Paul's expression "certain of your own poets," it would

[1] Ovid says, "Cum Sole et lunâ semper Aratus erit."—*Quoted by Humphry on the Acts.*

The writings of Aratus were well known and much prized: indeed, commentaries were written upon them. Being by birth and repute a Cilician or rather a native of Tarsus, and consequently with whose writings Paul could not fail to be familiar, it has been surmised that among the "Books" the Apostle had left behind him at Troas, and which he charges Timothy in his last letter to bring with him to his Mamertine prison,—the poems of Aratus may not unlikely have been included (Tim. iv. 13).

seem to denote that the quotation was familiar to the Athenians; moreover, that it was used by more than one Attic bard. Many expositors have given the one already referred to;—also an identical reference in the Hymn of Cleanthes—himself an Athenian and Stoic philosopher, who, after leading a life of rigid asceticism, committed suicide by starvation. Both poems are, of course, in celebration of Jupiter. I give Mr. Lewin's translation of the former—that of Aratus:—

> "He animates the mart and crowded way,
> The restless ocean and the shelter'd bay;
> Doth care perplex? Is lowering danger nigh?
> *We are his offspring*, and to Jove we fly."

Dr. Kitto furnishes a literal rendering of the quotation from the "Hymn of Cleanthes;" adding that the hymn has been pronounced to be the purest piece of natural religion extant in pagan antiquity, containing, as he farther observes, nothing unworthy of a Christian or an inspired writer:—

> "Most glorious of Immortals, Thou many named,
> Always Almighty, prime Ruler of Nature,
> Governing all by law, JOVE—hail!
> For mortals all, Thee to address is meet:
> *For we are Thy offspring.* But the lot
> Of puny mortals who upon this earth
> *Do live and creep*, is only like
> The image of a Voice.
> Thee obeys the starry world, revolving round

> The earth, and following where Thou leadest:
> For Thou, with hand invincible, doth wield
> A thunderbolt, two-edged, flaming and ever living,
> The stroke of which all Nature dreads."

If, after what the Apostle had just stated as to the common origin of the nations, the pride of his auditory may for the moment have been wounded, —this new passing reference to one or more of their minstrels, would seem to have condoned the offence and engaged afresh their attention. 'This Jew,' would be their verdict, 'can be no uneducated illiterate fanatic. He must be a man of culture, who is able to enforce his argument by quotations like these. Nor, moreover, can he be narrow or exclusive. At all events, whatever his distinctive religious dogmas may be, he recognises us as "God's offspring:"—the children of his Supreme Divinity.' If there be, in consequence, a fresh stir of sympathetic interest among the audience, it seems to act as a stimulus on the Speaker himself. He may venture to advance a step farther in his protest, as he points, once more, across the intervening valley.

The masses of parti-coloured Pentelican marble, are not alone in the homage done to false gods and a false worship. The precious metals have been made auxiliaries—as we have already abundantly noted: *gold* and *silver*, as well as stone and

ivory, "*graven by art and man's device*" (v. 29). From the text furnished by their own poets he emphasises the lesson—"*Forasmuch then, as we are the (acknowledged) offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto these*" (v. 29). 'To make the Godhead like unto stone, would be to repudiate our divine origin.' He wished to serve them legatees to a heritage and patrimony more precious far than hoards of gold, 'yea, the most fine gold'—the unsearchable riches of Christ—"Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." He might, indeed, appropriately here have borrowed the language of an Eastern Emir, very familiar to him, language whose beauty and pathos at least would have been appreciated by his audience, however otherwise unacquainted with the words themselves:—"But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.

No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?" (Job xxviii. 12–21.)

The Apostle now proceeds with a more solemn home appeal to heart and conscience: while at the same time unfolding, not natural, but revealed truth:—"*And the times of this ignorance God winked at:*"—(an unhappy and commonplace rendering,—much better, as accepted by all expositors—"overlooked.") He speaks of the Almighty's wondrous patience and long-suffering:—so many ages bearing with evil in His fair creation;—that creation which the Speaker, in a future letter, describes as "groaning and travailing in pain:"—'The God whose name and existence I vindicate, had His own Sovereign meaning and reasons, for leaving the nations, century after century, to grope in the darkness of their blinded imaginations—not sending, as He did to my fathers, accredited messengers and interpreters of His will. One of these purposes, among others, may have been, to make the experiment, on the widest scale, as to the possibility of man's unaided reason and consciousness attaining a knowledge of Him-

self. But now, ignorance of the Divine nature and of the Divine will, cannot be pleaded in condonation. A new era of revelation and responsibility has dawned:—"*Now He commandeth all men* (you Grecians included) *everywhere to repent*" (v. 30). Deceive me not: do not attempt to deceive yourselves, or that Heart-searching God I declare to you. The objects of your worship, ideals of beauty though they be, minister to the sensuous. Let not the boasted glory of art—the luscious and splendid in external form and ritual, conceal its dangerous affinity with the base and the impure. Minerva, your patroness of Wisdom, presides as Protectress over those mighty Sanctuaries close by. But Wisdom—the true Wisdom I have come to unfold to you—"the Wisdom which is from above, is first pure" (James iii. 17). God's call to you, and to all, in this new age (*αιον*) is to 'repent.' Mimic and parody the truly Beautiful by no unworthy counterfeit. Do not permit vice to be shielded in cunning workmanship, under gorgeous shrine and imposing architecture. My loud call is—Repent! Repent! Renounce your idol worship. Holier than the best of human sanctuaries are these hearts of yours purified from corruption, made to serve the living and the true God.'

He proceeds, in augmented tones of solemnity, as he approaches yet deeper — diviner — more august themes. He urges this call to immediate repentance, by a disclosure, altogether new to them,—an article which had no place in their accepted creeds. He unfolds JESUS, that Divine Saviour, whose Person and work he had come in their midst to proclaim—*as the appointed Judge of the world.* What are all these sculptured triumphs to Him, in comparison with the power and charm of divine heavenly graces wrought by His Spirit;—not in those who are worshippers of an "unknown name," but of whom it is elsewhere said—"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name." "The Epicurean, teaching himself to seek for tranquil enjoyment as the chief object of life, heard of One claiming to be the Lord of men, who had shown them the glory of dying to self, and had promised to those who fought the good fight bravely, a nobler bliss than the comforts and luxuries of life could yield. The Stoic, cultivating a stern and isolated moral inde-

pendence, heard of One who had promised to give His righteousness, to those who trusted not in themselves but in Him." [1]

The first part of this novel revelation must have been startling enough to that group of listeners regarding the Day of Judgment and *the man* ("a Man") whom God had ordained to preside on the august tribunal. But if its assertion was heard in silence and without demur, not so was it, when the climax was reached, that the Great Father-God had given assurance unto all men of the final assize—the supreme consummation, in that "*He had raised*" this Divine Man and appointed Judge "*from the dead*"—the pledge that His people were to rise also (v. 31).

This proved too much for that susceptible and irritable auditory. Much that went before may have roused opposition or stirred to protest and remonstrance. They hitherto, however, at all events, had manifested self-restraint, and listened, with a cynical, contemptuous indifference. But RESURRECTION!—Resurrection not of spirit merely, but of the crumbling body:—the Resurrection of the mortal tenement consigned to the tomb or to ashes! Resurrection of this Man of Nazareth, the first-fruits of a great Easter Day for all the world-ages!

[1] Dr. Smith's Bib. Dic. Art. "Paul," p. 743.

And the assurance "*was given unto all men:*" equivalent to the assertion which, as we have seen, specially roused their antipathies, that all are equal in religion—that the polished and refined Greek is, on a predicted solemn day of reckoning, to be found side by side with Jews and barbarians! No, no. It cannot be! It is diametrically opposed to their every view about matter and spirit. We can readily picture to ourselves the gathering and bursting of the storm. The Epicureans, to whom any resurrection—far more that of the body, was a myth and fantasy, we read, "*mocked*" (v. 32)—ironical words and derisive jeers greeted the statement of this 'Bird-Pecker:' while the Stoics—less pronounced in their opposition—more tolerant of alien creeds—especially if these inculcated demon-worship, or claimed some new human apotheosis,—with more of the courtesy of a courteous race, merely evaded the subject. The new dogma had startled them with its novelty. Their curiosity had been aroused. Perhaps, more than all, they had been attracted and arrested by the earnestness of the Preacher. So, with a wave of the hand, they requested the postponement of any farther exposition:—"We will hear thee again of this matter" (v. 32).

The clamour was for the time hushed. The "waves of babble" rocked themselves to rest.

No severities of the law were threatened to "the setter forth of strange gods." A Greek poet speaks of this sudden collapse of the most animated of these conclaves. "A drop of rain," as he expresses it, was sufficient, at times, to cool the fever-heats of discussion and disperse the versatile auditory. Whatever was the cause now, an assembly ever memorable dissolved; the hearers were once more lost in the crowd and buzz of the Agora beneath.[1]

[1] Though all writers, secular as well as sacred, have borne witness to its argumentative skill and oratorical power, we have the strongest ground for surmising that the discourse of the Apostle, as recorded in the Acts, is only given in outline or brief extract. We can hardly think of this formal adjournment to the Areopagus, affording such a wonderful opportunity to the Speaker to unfold his great message:—and all the result being, as a writer has expressed it—"what would not occupy five minutes in delivering." Be it however either partial or complete, it is interesting to think that the Text (the words) must have been supplied by St. Paul himself: St. Luke—the writer of the Acts, not being with him: he, indeed, as we have seen, being all 'alone.' It must have either been dictated orally to the Apostolic Biographer, at a future time; or, like some few other statements, elsewhere mentioned, they might be "written in large characters by his own hand" (Gal. vi. 11). Dean Alford's remarks, with their scholarly insight, are well worth quoting:—"Do we discover in the narrative or speech the traces of *an unusual* hand, and if so, *whose is it?* That *some unusual hand* has been here employed, is evident: for in the six verses 16–21 inclusive, we have no fewer than eleven expressions foreign to Luke's style, or nowhere else occurring; and in the speech itself no fewer than twenty. Now, of these thirty-one expressions, five are either peculiar to, or employed principally by Paul; besides that we find the phrase τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, so frequently (see reff.) used by him of his own spirit or feelings. That the ἅπαξ λεγόμενα in the speech exceed in number the expressions indicative of his style, may fairly be accounted for by the peculiar nature of the occasion on which he spoke. Here, I think, we can hardly fail to trace the hand of the Apostle by quite as many indications as we may expect to find. That Luke should, as in every case, have wrought in the section into his work, and given it the general form of his own narrative, would only be natural, and we find it has been so."—*Prolegomena, Acts of the Apostles*, p. 12.

Part II.

DISCOURSE ON THE AREOPAGUS EXPANDED: WITH ITS FOURFOLD THEME.

"He had not intended to speak immediately: but nevertheless presently, without waiting for his companions, stimulated by a remarkable and extraordinary zeal, this Soldier of Christ commences the action at once."—*Bengel.*

"Those sufferings which would have broken the back of an ordinary patience, did but make him rise up with the greater eagerness and resolution for the doing of his duty. . . . St. Hierom cries him up as a great master of composition: that as oft as he heard him, he seemed to hear, not words but thunder."—*Cave's Lives of the Apostles*, A.D. 1676.

Let us now proceed, not to any additional theological exposition or analytic exegesis beyond what we have ventured to give in the last chapter;—but rather to extract the spirit of the memorable Discourse delivered from the "stone pulpit" of the Areopagus.

The Address—in itself a compendium of religious truth—seems appropriately to resolve itself into four parts, or themes.

The God of Nature.
The God of Providence.
The God of Grace.
The God of Judgment.

Though the connection be an arbitrary and fanciful one, this fourfold division, as we have ventured to note at the close of each section,—seems singularly to harmonise with some successive strains in the greatest of the Great Hymns of Christendom.

I.

The God of Nature.

"Earth is crammed with Heaven,
And every common bush aflame with God."
—*Mrs. Barrett Browning.*

"Only on the firm foundation of the Old Testament doctrine of Creation, can we rightly build the New Testament Doctrine of Redemption: and only he who scripturally believes and apprehends by faith the earliest words of Revelation, concerning a Creator of all things, can also apprehend, know, and scripturally worship, THE MAN, in whom God's word, down to its latest canonical Revelation, gathers together all things."—*Stier's Words of the Apostles*, p. 295.

"Those who have obtained the farthest insight into nature, have been in all ages firm believers in God."—*Dr. Whewell.*

"Along with other and better revivals at the era of the Reformation, came the resuscitation of this doctrine of God—the God of Nature. 'We are in the dawn of a new Era,' says Luther, 'we are beginning to think something of the natural world which was ruined in Adam's fall. We are learning to see all around us the greatness and glory of the Creator. We can see the Almighty hand—the Infinite Goodness in the humblest flower. We praise Him, we thank Him, we glorify Him. We recognise in creation the power of His word. He spake and it was done.'"—*Quoted by Mr. Froude in his "Times of Erasmus and Luther."*

"Listen to the fairy tales of science,
Solemn, and stupendous, and sublime;
Nature's voice springs out a proud defiance
To the puny sceptics of our time:
Age to age speaks out, each generation
Finds new wisdom coming at its call,
While men, be sure, of each and every nation
Recognise the First Great Cause of all."

THE GOD OF NATURE.

THE Apostle's opening theme was one, in which—though bearing an interpretation very different from his, he was in close touch and sympathy with his audience—"GOD, THAT MADE THE WORLD AND ALL THINGS THEREIN, SEEING THAT HE IS LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH" (v. 24).

To the Greek, Religion was nothing without Nature: or rather, to him, Religion and Nature were convertible terms. In a truer sense than what has been said of the stones and frescoes of Venice, Nature to the children of Hellas was their Bible—their "illuminated missal." Every page had its brilliant initial and borderings. Not only so, but each of these pages had some religious association or identification with god or demigod. Though to the Athenian the Acropolis was the visible Temple "made with hands," where sacred thoughts had their embodiment in marble, or bronze, or gold; his true Shrine and Sanctuary after all, was some court in the outer material

world which imagination consecrated to a separate and appropriate deity. With all their purely mythical character, beautiful dreams assuredly they were. Was it the olive woods, and pine forest, and pastoral solitudes? there the rural Pan sat piping his rustic reed, or lay stretched in dreamy slumbers under his fir-tree. Was it the stream or secluded fountain in the depth of primeval forests or rocky dells and glades? the wood nymphs were there, investing the spot with religious awe, and converting the clump of woodland into a 'sacred grove.' Was it the bays and creeks of that sea of azure-blue, which bathed the Attic shores or Ægean Isles? They saw among these, ever and anon, Poseidon the 'Shaker of the Earth,' with his Trident; who in the partition of divine rule by Saturn among his sons, got as his, chiefly the realm of the ocean. They conjured up thoughts of his palace in its depths of pearl and sea-weed. They imagined they would behold, alike in calm and storm, the Sea-god driving his golden-maned steeds through the briny highway;—the sportive monsters of the ocean doing him homage; his immediate retainers blowing conchs, and securing, amid environing tempests which they bridled, a calm path for their king. While Amphitrite, his queen, and Queen of Beauty,

bearing a similar trident in her hand, had her own sea-car of pearly shells drawn by Tritons, through a track of iridescent foam. Was it the beautiful sunshine?—that Attic sky with its wealth of heavenly light—dazzling in its meridian, and golden in its setting suns? that sun, ages before the birth of Greece, had been adored and worshipped in Egyptian Thebes and Karnac as Amun-Ra:—by Chaldean and Persian, by Assyrian and Phœnician, in their Baal-shrines. But the Greek, in Phœbus Apollo, the Lord of the Cithara and the unerring bow, had a fairer incarnation:—Apollo—the god of Light: light being the highest expression of beauty; also investing him with insight into futurity as the god of Oracles. Was it when the dews of early morning fell,—or at eventide when the shepherds were folding their flocks in the Thessalian Vale of Tempe or on the slopes of Hymettus, Ossa, or Helicon? Hermes the god-Messenger would be seen with winged feet and the twisted caduceus, bearing the telephonic message of its day from the court of the gods to the abodes of men.[1] Was it the fields of

[1] The myth of the birth of Hermes on the mountains of Southern Greece is thus beautifully told by Mr. Ruskin. On the Mountain of Cyllene he was "born of the eldest of those stars of spring—that Maia, from whom your own month of May has its name; bringing to you, in the green of her garlands, and the white of her hawthorn, the unrecognised symbols of the pastures and the wreathed snows of Arcadia, where long ago she was Queen

early green or the valleys of golden grain? *Gaia*, the sedate mother of agriculture, would be seen listening to the tinkle of the harvest sickles and the strains of the harvest song. While, dominating all, was their picture of the Mount of Olympus wreathed in inapproachable cloud: the abode of the great Zeus, Father of gods and men. Seated on its highest summit in perpetual festival and banquet, he was pictured sending forth from time to time his varied subjects on their missions, whether of favour or retribution, to the wide realms of the earth below. His favourite daughter —our now familiar Athene,—goddess of Light, Understanding, and Wisdom, who was said to have sprung full-panoplied from his head, was recognised and worshipped as presiding also over the processes of Nature.

We thus see, from these brief references to a fascinating mythology, how first of all, the love of nature was incorporated in the very soul of Greece. Hers was a beautiful child-life: recalling the words of a true child-poet:—

"Skies are light above you:
Trees bend down to kiss you, breeze and blossom love you."

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of Stars; there, first cradled and wrapt in swaddling-clothes; then is born the shepherd of the clouds, winged-footed and deceiving,—blinding the eyes of Argus,—escaping from the grasp of Apollo—restless messenger between the highest sky and topmost earth—'the herald Mercury, new lighted on a heaven-kissing hill.'"—*The Queen of the Air*, p. 29.

But there was, as we have just seen, more in the Hellenic than this mere child-love of the inanimate world. It was linked with the loftier sentiments and aspirations, however inadequate these, at the best, were. The Greek was in one sense a Pantheist,—all Nature was to him full of God. In his own erroneous way, however, he was better and more advanced than Pantheist: for through the mist of these mythic dreams, we see how he clung to the belief of divine personalities. The Deity was with him no abstraction—the Being of a spirit-world. The belief did not resolve itself into the "unknown and unknowable" of later phases and times. Each member of their Pantheon was clothed with attributes alike human and divine. So vivid was their conception of each, that, as we have more than once noted in former chapters, they could fashion their ideals not only in noble sculpture, but in definite, recognised shape: from the fantastic, semi-human Pan—to the exquisite embodiment of beauty in the bright-eyed Apollo. Each niche in this great Nature-Temple was filled with a distinct Individuality. Phidias and Parrhasius were to them what Raphael and Michael Angelo were in future Christian art: Eleusis and Delphi what the Holy Sepulchre and Loretto were in the Middle Ages.

But the polytheism of the Greek was as unsatisfactory from the human side as it was erroneous from the divine. Let a discerning writer explain in his own lucid words :—"Polytheism divided the contemplation over many objects : and as the outward objects were manifold, so was there a want of unity in the inward life. The Grecian mind was distracted by variety. He was to obtain wisdom from one Deity : eloquence from that Mercurius for whom Paul was taken : purity from Diana for whom Ephesus was zealous : protection for his family or country from the respective tutelary deities : success by a prayer to Fortune. Hence dissipation of mind : that fickleness for which the Greeks were famous : and the restless love of novelty which made Athens a place of literary and social gossip—'some new thing.' All stability of character rests on the contemplation of changeless unity. . . . If you view the world as the Greek did, all is so various that you must either refer it to various deities, or to different moods of the same deity. To-day you are happy — God is pleased : to-morrow miserable—God is angry. St. John referred these all to unity of character—'God is love.' . . . Hence came deep calm—the repose which we are toiling all our lives to find and which the Greek never found."[1] We cannot

[1] Robertson's Sermons, vol. i., pp. 185-8.

wonder that it was with them as with the Romans. Paul's subsequent indictment included both. "They became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools: and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man" (Rom. i. 21, 22, 23).[1]

It was to a very different Nature-worship, not seen through the distorted medium of 'gods many and lords many,' to which St. Paul now directs the thoughts of the throng on the Areopagus. His opening theme is one on Natural Religion: only redeemed and rescued from that bewildering polytheism, with its "complexity of impersonal laws," and asserting the unity and undivided Personality of the true God and Great Creator—"*God, that made the world and all*

[1] Though we reserve, for a final chapter, reference to the modern religion of Greece, we may here, in a note, give the passing observation of a cultured traveller in the earlier part of the present century, showing how the old nature-myths and superstitions still survive. "We entered a real forest. Here our Greeks were startled by a bird which flew across the road, and which they called 'Kira.' That bird they said had once been a woman, who, deprived of all her kindred by some great calamity, retired to some solitary mountain to bewail her loss, and continued on the summit forty days repeating in the sad monotony of grief the lamentation of the country,—'Ah me! ah me!'—till, at the expiration of that period, she was changed, by pitying Providence, into a bird. So strangely live on, in modern tradition, the fables of heathen Greece, mingled though they may be with the incongruous accompaniments of Christian legend."—*Lord Carnarvon's Athens and Morea*, p. 111.

things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth." No Epicurean deity dwelling isolated and apart from human interests and sympathies, in a state of listless repose. All the material organism of the world (*Κόσμος*)—the Universe—"under law and reduced to order"—is under His supervision. He regards Him as the Appointer of the seasons. Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, are His own four Evangelists in the great 'Gospel of Creation.' As it has been well remarked—"He speaks to the human heart through Nature if men will but hearken. This is the truth of which Pantheism is the caricature."[1] "For, of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Rom. xi. 36).

The Volume then, the Apostle thus opens, was one which he and his hearers read together with delighted community of interest. It was a volume whose pages he himself had never been so foolish —we use the word advisedly—had never been so *impious*, as to undervalue or repudiate. In his first missionary journey, amid Nature-scenes as fascinating in their way as those of Attica,—how beautifully does he discourse to the Lystrians of "the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea,

[1] Professor Lumby on the Acts, *in loc.*

and all things that are therein" (Acts xiv. 15)! In writing, at a subsequent time, that same priceless Letter to the Romans to which we have just referred, in what glowing terms does he speak of "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). Though he knew too well the inadequacy of the study of Nature to solve deeper problems, he would never think of eliminating from his creed this "proem of Redemption:" the bright setting to a yet brighter and costlier jewel. If we can venture on a comparison which suggests itself in passing,—the allusion to this nature-religion was to St. Paul like the opening overture or prologue to a great Oratorio,—a quiet passage, introductory to the after theme;—and giving value to the latter by contrast. The subdued 'pastoral symphony' of the greatest of our tone-poets may be recalled, in which we seem to be in the hush of solitude, under the pale light of moon and stars. But this is only a prelude and preparation, effective by its soft, tender, dreamy melody, to give power and pathos to the subsequent magnificent scenes and passages culminating in the Hallelujah Chorus.

It is surely altogether a misconception, which

would represent the Jew as devoid of love for the beautiful in the outer world. Who dare make such an assertion with the Old Testament Scriptures in their hands? Commence if you will with the birth, or as it may be rather called the second birth of the Hebrew people, on their way from Egypt to Canaan: the farewell addresses of Moses are full of vivid Nature-touches. The opening strain of *his* Psalm (xc.)—the oldest in the Psalter—is inspired by Creation's noblest monuments: as if the memories of his desert sojourn and its Mountain-Sanctuaries were more enduring far than even the colossal temples and pyramids of the Pharaohs among which he had been reared. It is a lofty ascription to the world's Creator and His handiwork:—"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." The Book of Job, whatever be its precise antiquity and chronological place in the sacred writings—though undoubtedly ancient it must be—is, throughout, a wondrous nature-poem—instinct with reverence for the works of the Mighty Framer: from the brooks fretting in their channels, or the great Behemoth in the waters,

to Pleiades and Orion, Arcturus and his sons, in the firmament of night.

If we pass to David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel; an Æolian harp swept by the winds of heaven, seems constantly to join in pathetic accompaniment with his varied spiritual songs. He seems to have drank in this native inspiration ever since the time when, as a boy, he fed his father's flocks in the valleys of Bethlehem. Now he is under the starry canopy, giving forth from his "Kinnor" 'the Heavens are telling.' Now he is under the spell of a thunderstorm (Ps. xxix.) bursting forth in all its magnificence and grandeur in the passes of the Lebanon: crashing the cedars, and discovering the forests, and gleaming in the waves of the Great Sea. Now he is amid the oaks and waterbrooks of Gilead (Ps. xlii.). Now, it is a Vision of Palestine in its autumn beauty—the valleys studded thick with the golden corn, amid bleat of flocks and the song of reapers — the little hills rejoicing on every side (Ps. lxv.). Who but the intensest observer of Nature and most loving votary at her shrine, could have composed, as the monarch of Israel did, that 104th Psalm?—Creation's noblest anthem and *Benedicite.* Then, comes the close of the life of the Poet-King. It is touching and remarkable to see how this

Minstrel of Minstrels imported, so to speak, his intense sympathy with Nature to his very death-bed: how he,

> "Whose daily teachers were the woods and rills,
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills,"—

who had sung so sweetly, in life's early morn, of "the sun as a bridegroom going forth from his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run his race;"—how he loved to revert to the old symbol at the supreme hour of all; as if his admiration of the external world only expired with his expiring breath. "Now these be the last words of David: . . . 'He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.'" (2 Sam. xxiii. 1-4.)

Were there any need of prolonging these references or accumulating proof,—look how often the hallowed fire of Isaiah is kindled at Nature-shrines! Mountains and forests, rivers and valleys;—the wilderness and the solitary place becoming glad—the mountains—in the loftiest strain of poetic hyperbole—breaking out into singing, the trees of the field clapping their hands. Or, delighting thus to draw his Nature-teaching

from the noblest of all Oriental 'picture-galleries:'—"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. xl. 26). Nor, in these rapid references to passages of Old Testament story, can we omit Habakkuk's sublime pæan of Nature-worship, which, perhaps, we are not wrong in saying stands alone, unequalled among its inspired compeers: (iii. 3)—

"God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.

"He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: His ways are everlasting.

"The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of Thine arrows they went, and at the shining of Thy glittering spear.

"Thou didst walk through the sea with Thine horses, through the heap of great waters," &c.

All Palestine travellers are struck with the majesty of Mount Hermon. It forms the colossal barrier of the north, and mingles its snow-crowned peak with many memorable views in the Holy

Land. It is supposed that its name means 'the Great Sanctuary;' as if the God of Israel had reared this vast Nature-Temple or Nature-Altar to keep Him, as Creator, in everlasting remembrance, dwarfing in its proportions all 'Temples made with hands.' [1]

So far, indeed, from being the case that the Jew was indifferent in his observation of the outer world, and neglectful of his homage to Nature and her laws,—it is enough to remark that in all the three greatest national festivals, Nature, and that too by distinct and specific divine authority, had significant recognition. In the directions regarding the celebration of the Passover as detailed in the 23rd of Leviticus—along with the foreshadowing of diviner truths and realities, it was expressly ordained that "the first of the first fruits" were to be gathered and brought as an offering into the Holy courts. We know, moreover, with what pomp of ceremony and ecstatic gladness, in later times, the appointed

[1] At the base of this same mountain, at Banias (Panias—Pan), the Greek had his temple and cave sacred to Pan, his rural deity—one of the chiefs as we have seen in his Pantheon. The writer can personally subscribe to the accuracy of this colour-picture:—"We went a second time early in the morning to Pan's cave, through the willows, and poplars, and great olives, and all sorts of verdure under the shrine of El-Khidr above—the God of green or animating power in Nature."—(*Bacchante*, vol. ii., p. 703.) The whole mountain is studded with relics of Nature-worship: which worship is continued to this day by the Druses.

ceremony was observed. A similarly ordained celebration took place at the Feast of Pentecost. The first fruits of the wheat harvest (at the conclusion of corn harvest and before the vintage) were then borne, with similar festive joy, to the Sanctuary. While at the Feast of Tabernacles—the crowning festival of the Jewish year and the most jubilant one—we know how Nature was ransacked to stimulate the spiritual ardour of the worshipping throngs. How Jerusalem and its environs were resolved into a vast congeries of booths and tabernacles. It was the 'Feast of ingathering,' after all the fruits of the ground were reaped or plucked:—the Harvest-home, the Harvest thanksgiving; when gladness was so exuberant, that when the Great Prophet seeks for a figure descriptive of intensest delight,—it is, "they joy before Thee, according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil" (Isa. ix. 3).

If we pass for a moment from the Old to the New Testament times and dispensation, it is enough for us to note, how all that we have already advanced is enforced and illustrated in the words of the Great Master,—from the flowers He plucked in the fields of Galilee outvying the grandeur of Solomon,—to the teachings of

the sky, morning and evening (Matt. vi. 29 and xvi. 2, 3).

If from Apostolic times we go to the early centuries, we are impressed with the same. Indeed we do not think it is sufficiently noted what lovers of material objects the early Christians were; at all events if this can be gathered from the variety of symbolism which they have still left engraven on the walls of the Roman Catacombs, or on slabs which have been removed from these strangest of burial-grounds. Among many other natural objects which it would be out of place here to give in detail, we have the sun and moon, the mountain, the rock, the rainbow, the gushing stream. We have, from the olive and the palm—the date, the cedar tree and the vine with its grape-clusters, to the ear of corn, the lily of the valley, and the rose of Sharon. In the words of a distinguished writer on sacred art, in whose pages these references will be found in more extended form, the believers of the first ages "touched nothing that they did not Christianise; they consecrated this visible world into a Temple to God, of which the heavens were the dome, the mountains the altars, the forests the pillared aisles, the breath of spring the incense, and the running streams the music—while in every tree they sheltered under, in every

flower they looked upon and loved, they recognised a virtue or a spell; a token of Christ's love for man, or a memorial of His martyrs' sufferings."[1]

To come down to the Middle Ages,—who is not familiar with the story of St. Francis of Assisi's strong love of Nature and his enthusiastic admiration of all her works, animate and inanimate? To borrow words better than my own, —"'Laudate sia Dio meo Signore con tute le creature.' 'Praise be to the Lord my God from every creature.' And with this cry on his lips, he ran through the country like some angelic spirit, his head touched with a star of light, and his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, calling on his Brother the Sun, his Sister the Moon, his brothers the Winds, his sister Water, his brother Fire, his mother Earth, to join him in singing the Lord's Song; and thus he became the Priest, not only of men but of all creation."[2]

Has the Church of modern days refused to join this choir of Nature-worshippers? We are glad to say, No. Her Easter and Pentecost, even in churches where the authority of such days is not

[1] Lord Lindsay's Sketches of the History of Christian Art.
[2] *Contemporary Review*, 1884, p. 843.

ecclesiastically recognised, are very generally commemorated in spirit: sometimes in glad song,—sometimes in literal offering, from field and garden, by fruit and sheaf; while (to take one among many attestations that amid diviner ascriptions to God as Redeemer, God the Almighty Creator is not forgotten) the most familiar Psalm in the Service of the Anglican Church, sung or chanted each Sabbath morning, not only throughout England but among all English-speaking races, is an anthem of *Nature*. Here are the well-known strains which on each recurring Lord's day are echoed throughout Christendom—

VENITE, EXULTEMUS DOMINO.

"O come let us sing unto the Lord:
Let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving:
And show ourselves glad in Him with Psalms.
For the Lord is a great God:
And a great King above all gods.
In His hand are all the corners of the earth:
And the strength of the hills is His also.
The sea is His and He made it:
And His hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship, and fall down:
And kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For He is the Lord our God:
And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand" (Ps. xcv.)

Our best modern poets drink their inspiration from the same Fount. The leader—the 'Precentor' of these Nature-choristers is undoubtedly Wordsworth. His motto and keynote, responded to by many kindred and congenial minds and harps, is—

> "Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
> Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears;
> To me the meanest flower that blows, can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Tennyson's love of outer Nature is interlaced with his finest poetry. It cannot even sleep or be hushed to rest in the "*In Memoriam.*" It breaks out elsewhere, from the iridescence of the pearly shell to the murmur of doves amid "immemorial elms." He reminds us, in one of his latest utterances, that so long as we have a poor child in an hospital-ward, and a flower in the meadow or by the hedgerow to take to it, we shall be recognised as one of the Creator's ministering Priests. His words, sung regarding those who are almoners of Nature's lowliest floral gifts, may be applied to many other of her kindred delights:—

> "They that can wander at will where the works of the Lord are revealed,
> Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field.

Flowers to those 'spirits in prison' are all they can know
of the spring:
They freshen and sweeten the wards, like the waft of an
angel's wing."[1]

We might quote indefinitely from prose poets. "We speak of the Volume of Nature," says Carlyle: "and truly a Volume it is,—whose Author and Writer is God. To read it! Dost thou—does man, so much as know the Alphabet thereof? With its Words, Sentences, and grand descriptive Pages, poetical and philosophical, spread out through solar systems and thousands of years? It is a Volume in celestial hieroglyphs, in the true Sacred-writing; of which even Prophets are happy that they can read here a line and there a line. . . . Nature is the Time-vesture of God."[2]

"We must," says Charles Kingsley, "go up into the forest in the evenings, and pray there with nothing but God's cloud-temple between us and His heaven, and His choir of small birds, and all happy things who praise Him all night long. And in the still summer noon too, with the lazy-paced clouds above, and the distant sheep-bell, and the bees humming in the beds of thyme, and one bird making the hollies ring a moment, and then all is still, hushed, awe-bound, as the great

[1] Lord Tennyson's Ballads, 1880, p. 91.
[2] Sartor Resartus, p. 178-183.

thunder-clouds slide up from the far south! Then there to praise God! Aye, even when the heaven is black with the wind, and the thunder crackling over our heads, then to join in the pæan of the storm-spirits to Him, whose pageant of power passes over the earth and harms us not in its mercy." [1]

Or, to give one more extract from the most conspicuous of prose-minstrels. Mr. Ruskin—in one of the most beautiful of his passages, remarks —"There are few so utterly lost but that they receive, and know that they receive, at certain moments, strength of some kind, or rebuke from the appealings of outward things; and that it is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, flower, leaf, or sound, nor without a sense of a dew falling upon him out of the sky. . . . The sky is for all. It is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart; for soothing and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful—never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in

[1] Life and Letters.

its tenderness, almost divine in its affinity. . . . God is not in the earthquake nor in the fire, but in the still small voice. . . . It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty — the deep and the calm and the perpetual; that which must be sought ere it can be seen, and loved ere it is understood; things which the Angels work out for us daily, and yet vary externally—it is through these that her lesson of devotion is chiefly taught and the blessing of beauty given." Then, in another place, he records and protests with regret, that the love of Nature is not imported more generally into the pulpit, not as a substitute for higher and more needed teaching, but to make up a full message from God to man:—"Much of the doing and teaching even of holy men, who in recommending the love of God to us, refer but seldom to those things in which it is most abundantly and most immediately shown: though they insist much on His giving of bread, and raiment, and health (which He gives to all inferior creatures) they require us not to thank Him for that glory of His works which He has permitted us alone to perceive. They tell us often to meditate in the closet, but they send us not like Isaac into the fields at even. . . . I think, that of the weaknesses, distresses, vanities, schisms, and sins,

which often even in the holiest of men, diminish their usefulness, and mar their happiness, there would be fewer if, in their struggle with Nature fallen, they sought for more aid from Nature undestroyed." Mr. Froude in his "Oceana," if we may add a yet later testimony, too truthfully draws this disparaging contrast between the old Roman peasant—he might have included the Greek,—and their modern English successor:—"The sky to him was a dial-plate on which the stars were pointers; and he read the hour of the night from their position on its face. The constellations were his monthly almanack, and as the sun moved from one into another, he learned when to plough and when to sow, when to prune his vines and clip the wool from his sheep. The planets watched over the birth of his children. The star of the morning, rising as the herald of Aurora, called him to the work of the day. The star of the evening, glimmering pale through the expiring tints of sunset, sent him home to supper and to rest; and to his ignorant mind these glorious sons of heaven were gods or the abode of gods. It is all changed now. The Pleiades and Orion and Sirius still pass nightly over our heads in splendid procession; but they are to us no more than bodies in space, important only for purposes

of science. We have fixed their longitudes, we can gauge in the spectroscope their chemical composition: we have found a parallax for the Dog-star, and know in how many years the light which flows from it will reach us. But the shepherd and the husbandman no longer look to them to measure their times and seasons. . . . The visible divinities who were once so near to our daily lives are gone for ever." [1]

Thus have we sought to enforce and illustrate, in a very general way,—the first thesis in St. Paul's great Sermon. Already has allusion been made to the inadequacy of the Volume of Nature to throw 'light and leading' on higher spiritual verities. Though hers be sacred ground, tremulous with divine music, and all worthy of being approached with reverent feet, there are messages—profoundest secrets and problems which her oracle cannot solve or interpret, lacunæ in her manuscripts and cryptographs which cannot be supplied. We can gaze on the endless glories of fresco and mosaic in the outer courts: but we look in vain for the burning altar—the revelations of the inner Shekinah—the Most Holy Place. Nevertheless, we bow before her teachings:—we recognise the glory and majesty of her spell. Nay more, in the

[1] Oceana, p. 27.

quaint words of the oldest of English poets, in his "Canterbury Tales," we own her to be

"The Vicar of the Almightie Lord."

With the limitations already expressed, we can adopt, in closing, the verses, however well known, of a congenial interpreter and lay-preacher, a devout votary at Nature's shrine. He speaks of flowers; but these are only the representatives of whatever is lovely and 'worshipful' in 'the wide, wide world' of the great Creator,—

"Day stars! that ope your eyes with morn to twinkle
From rainbow galaxies of earth's creation,
And dewdrops on her lonely altars sprinkle
As a libation!

"Ye matin worshippers! who bending lowly
Before the risen sun—God's lidless eye—
Throw from your chalices a sweet and holy
Incense on high!

. . . . . .

"'Neath cloister'd boughs, each floral bell that swingeth
And tolls its perfume on the passing air,
Makes Sabbath in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer.

. . . . . .

"To that Cathedral, boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply,
Its choir the winds and waves, its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky.

"Your voiceless lips, O Flowers, are living preachers,
Each cup a pulpit, and each leaf a book,
Supplying to my fancy numerous teachers
From lonely nook.

"Ephemeral Sages! what instructors hoary
For such a world of thought could furnish scope?
Each fading calyx a memento mori,
Yet fount of hope.

. . . . . .

"Were I, O God, in churchless lands remaining,
Far from all voice of teachers or divines,
My soul would find in flowers of Thy ordaining
Priests, sermons, shrines!"

—*Horace Smith.*

"WE PRAISE THEE, O GOD:
WE ACKNOWLEDGE THEE TO BE THE LORD!

. . . .

HEAVEN AND EARTH ARE FULL
OF THE
MAJESTY OF THY GLORY!"

II.

The God of Providence.

"And I will trust that He who heeds
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads,
And stains those mosses green and gold,
Will still, as He hath done, incline
His gracious care to me and mine."

—*Whittier.*

"That there is a God who gave the earth to man to dwell in, Paul proves from the order of times and places: which indicates the consummate wisdom of the Governor—superior to all human counsels."—*Bengel.*

"Then sawest thou that this fair universe—were it the meanest province thereof, is in very deed, the star-domed City of God; that through every star, through every grass-blade, and most, through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams."—*Carlyle.*

"The mass of the world are erect against the admission of Special Providences. . . . If a man be a Sceptic, *cadit questio;* but if he believe in a Superintending Ruler, will he hesitate to say in the language of our Liturgy, 'O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that Thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them'?"—*Life of the Earl of Shaftesbury*, vol. ii., p. 273.

"Behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

—*Lowell.*

THE GOD OF PROVIDENCE.

THE great Apostle, having discoursed to his hearers from the Volume of NATURE, proceeds to open the Book of PROVIDENCE.

He has a succession of references to this new theme,—this equally gracious and beautiful Revelation of the God he worshipped. "HE GIVETH TO ALL, LIFE AND BREATH AND ALL THINGS" (ver. 25). "HE HATH DETERMINED THE TIMES BEFORE APPOINTED, AND THE BOUNDS OF THEIR HABITATION" (ver. 26). "HE IS NOT FAR FROM ANY ONE OF US. FOR IN HIM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING" (vers. 27, 28). He commends and fortifies these statements with the quotation from their own poet Aratus—"FOR WE ARE ALSO HIS OFFSPRING" (ver. 28).

In the preceding pages, we incidentally made allusion to the Apostle's Nature-appeal addressed to the Lystrians (Acts xiv. 15). It is worthy of note that, on the same occasion, he makes mention of the companion Volume of Providence:

that the mighty Creator is the mighty Sustainer: —"He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good: and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (ver. 17). Paul had now come from the fevered discussions of the Agora. Groups of Epicureans and Stoics had followed him to the Areopagus. The former famous sect, as we have seen, denied even the existence of a personal God —clinging to their wild 'atomic' theory of the original creation. If they thus disowned an Almighty Framer, it necessarily followed that they would repudiate the idea of a Superintending Governor. Even those among his hearers who recognised the existence of presiding divinities, tutelary deities, and demigods, conceived of them only as exalted human beings possessing all the passions of human nature: themselves the subjects of a stern necessity; and so absorbed in their own selfish interests—their lives of dreamy indolence—as to be regardless of the weal or woe —the joys or the sorrows of the race immeasurably beneath them. One of the designations of Zeus indeed, was—"Watcher over human affairs." But amid the heights and clouds of Olympus and its imperial felicities, he and his manifested the supreme indifference and unconcern just spoken

of toward all in the realms of earth. Whatever, then, the rivalry might be in other respects between the Stoics and Epicureans, they were at one in rejecting this Christian doctrine of Providence. The world, on their Pantheistic theory, was alike self-made and self-sustained: consigned to 'Moira,' —hapless, irresistible Fate.

It must not, however, be supposed that St. Paul, on this new theme, had an altogether unsympathetic audience. The Altars of the city—the offerings and libations, indicated that among others of their teachers, and at all events among the "common people" there existed a belief, crude and imperfect as it was, in a divine Presence and intervention. Their domestic joys and sorrows were hallowed and consecrated at the Temple of Hestia :—Hestia, the goddess and protectress of Home and all its sanctities. "Before her altar were transacted all the solemn events of the family. Here the young were married : here the dead were laid : here was brought the new-born infant to be carried round that sacred shrine as a sign of reception and welcome. Here, too, the slave ran for protection to this visible sign of the home divinity—when he had done wrong, and feared punishment ; and here the stranger, doubtful of his welcome, placed himself as under the

ægis of the goddess. First and last of all, libations were poured out to Hestia. . . . This sweet, chaste virgin-mother gathered up the prayers of all her children, as the sun gathers up the dew from the white fleeces strewn on the earth: and no one could feel desolate or abandoned while the fire burnt on her altar." [1]

The great religious processions and rites, Eucharistic and Propitiatory, of the Hellenes, would have been without meaning or explanation, had they entirely ignored some kind of moral government, alike over individuals and the nation.[2] Their poet Æschylus exhorts to a patient submission to 'destiny,' and recognises and enforces conformity to the will of the gods. If not an Athenian, it was a Spartan prayer — 'May the gods grant what is good for us.' The "Oracles" and "Mysteries" testified remarkably to the national acceptance of tenets which their philosophic sects denied. These in connection with our present chapter claim a passing reference.

It is computed that there were no less than 260 "oracles" throughout Greece. The oldest of these was that of Jupiter at Dodona. No campaign could be undertaken,—no crisis could be met,

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, January 1887.
[2] See Professor Dick on the Acts, p. 269.

without first ascertaining the mind of the gods. Hence the estimate placed on the oracular responses; specially those pronounced at their chief and most famous shrine at Delphi, on Mount Parnassus, with its celebrated fountain of Castalia. This was the oracle of Apollo, who uttered his ambiguous answers through the Pythian goddess seated on her tripod. These responses were subsequently interpreted by the *Evangelides* — the priestly apostles of "good tidings." 'The inquirers entered the great Temple in festal dress, with olive garlands and *stemmata*, or fillets of wool, led by the ὅσιοι, or sacred guardians of the Temple, who were five of the noblest citizens of Delphi' ("Rambles in Greece," p. 226). Despite of their obscurity, they often tended to nerve the hesitating warrior in the hour of battle and inspire with indomitable courage. "Delphi was to the Greeks, what Jerusalem was to the Jews, and Mecca is to the Mahommedans,—a national Temple in whose preservation all were interested, because all regarded it with veneration." [1] Similarly remarkable and reverently observed, were the well-known Eleusinian Mysteries. These were celebrated in Eleusis—a village of Attica. We only refer in passing, to their nine days' ceremonial,

[1] Goldsmith's History of Greece.

because of its mythological bearings on a recognition of Providence, or what was equivalent to such. On the third and fourth day of the religious festival there was a procession of the initiated 'mystæ,' bearing cakes of barley from the Rhasian plain along with the basket of Ceres containing pomegranates and poppies with other treasures of the earth and products of the soil. On the fifth day—'the day of torches,' there was a similar procession. Appointed priests led the way into the interior of the renowned Temple by the Well of Callichorus—the largest sacred edifice of Greece. The worshippers, in pairs, followed with torches. On the evening of the sixth day the latter—the Neophytes—were admitted into full privileges. "They were now allowed to behold visions of the creation of the universe; to see the workings of the divine agency by which the machine of the world was regulated and controlled: . . . to recognise the immortality of the soul as typified by the concealment of the corn sown in the earth; by its revival in the green blade; and by its full ripeness in the golden harvest. . . . They were then invited to view the spectacle of that happy state in which they themselves (the initiated) were to exist hereafter."[1] "Much that

[1] See Wordsworth's Athens and Attica, p. 135–6.

is excellent and divine," says Cicero, (the words are quoted by Mr. Mahaffy) "does Athens seem to me to have produced and added to our life, but nothing better than those Mysteries, by which we are formed and moulded from a rude and savage life to humanity: and indeed in the Mysteries we perceive the real principles of life, and learn not only to live happily, but to die with a fairer hope." —'These,' adds the author of the same interesting volume, 'are the words of a man writing in the days of the ruin and prostration of Greece. Can we then wonder at the enthusiastic language of the Homeric Hymn; of Pindar, of Sophocles, of Aristophanes, of Plato, of Isocrates, of Chrysippus. Every manner of writer, religious poet, worldly poet, sceptical philosopher, orator—all are of one mind about this, far the greatest of all the religious festivals of Greece' (p. 153–4). Yet, may it not be added, does not the inscription on the pedestal of the great statue of Minerva at Eleusis, reveal how faltering were the gropings after the divine truth which Paul now sought to unfold to his hearers:—"I AM ALL THAT IS, WAS, AND SHALL BE; AND NO ONE HAS EVER LIFTED MY VEIL"?

A doctrine thus so dim and distorted and so partially received, they needed to have brought home to them, in the divine light of Christianity,

the near personal cognisance of the Supreme Preserver, the watchful guardianship of Israel's Shepherd: — the everlasting Love of Israel's gracious *Father*. As a Shepherd,—not only exercising a general supervision over the sheep of His varied flock,—but with discriminating eye noting and tending each separate member: feeding it, following it, guarding it, pitying it,—and at last 'folding' it with His other ransomed flock amid the pastures of the blessed. As a Father, teaching—guiding—sustaining—protecting:—appointing the lot and sphere of life, and overruling all for His own glory and for their good. No spot where He is not; where His handiwork may not be seen, and where the touch of His loving finger may not be felt: from the little flower trembling in the cleft of glacier *crevasse*, to the revolutions of the planet in the firmament: the supreme — righteous—holy—all-wise Governor; "God *over all*, blessed for evermore." Yes "over all," for St. Paul would first, in this new announcement to his hearers on the Areopagus, seek to correct a misapprehension. Even those who entertained a comparatively intelligent belief regarding a moral government did so in a partial and limited form. Their divinities of Olympus, if anything, were exclusively national. They pre-

sided over the destinies of Hellas alone. The outside world was left in unsympathetic isolation. Zeus and his confederates would condescend to be patron deities of no outside barbarians. It was a new thing for the Athenians to have the line of Aratus interpreted to them in its gracious comprehension — "We are ALL His offspring." The recognised gods of the nation were, moreover, corporeal: and as such were localised. Not so with the God of St. Paul's revelation. His presence was not confined to any "Temples made with hands;" or His power limited to any country which may have claimed the right or monopoly to a higher civilisation. "He giveth to ALL" (indiscriminately) "life and breath and all things." It shows the breadth and enlargement of the speaker's own views:—how he had welcomed with his whole soul and heart the expansion of religion under the new and better dispensation. Could we suppose any one tempted more than another, thus to circumscribe and localise, it would assuredly have been a *Jew:* nurtured in the belief that the One true God—the God of Abraham—the God of his ancestors—dwelt exclusively in the Temple of Zion and overshadowed with His divine protection the Land of Promise alone. But this once "Hebrew of the Hebrews," had drunk in a wider,

nobler spirit at the foot of the Cross. He had imbibed, in heart and soul at least, memorable words from Divine lips—"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 23). The cry of those outside the Old Testament dispensation had been answered by the Divine Head of the New—"Doubtless Thou art our Father: though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not, Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer: Thy name is from everlasting" (Isa. lxiii. 16). FATHER! that is a new revelation which Christianity gives us of the God of Providence, a revelation all its own. While He is the Universal Parent, regarding whom every tribe on earth joins in the quoted strain—"We are His offspring," the doctrine of Providence is glorified and transfigured in the Cross of Calvary. He whose spiritual children we are, is the living loving paternal head and centre of Redeemed humanity. The Song of Providence is, through Eternity, to be blended with the Song of Grace—"They sing the Song of Moses the servant of God —(the hero in the greatest providential drama of inspired story) and the Song of the Lamb."

Alas! we fear it is not for us in this nineteenth, to impeach the Athenians who stood in the first

century on the heights of Mars' Hill, as they listened to what was to most of them the strange doctrine of the Christian Preacher. We dare not dispute that it is the tendency of our age to discard and disown the existence and agency of a Personal God. Science, falsely so called, would fain resolve the world into an aggregate of mechanical powers, an unintelligent mass guided and administered by physical forces; organised, self-evolving laws, which admit of no divine volition: no "Lord of Heaven and Earth" in the sense of a Supreme Disposer, animating, governing,—invested with essential perfections. It is not a little humbling, indeed, to feel that these materialistic fantasies—the accepted articles in many a modern creed, are far beneath the tenets of Socrates. He adopted what was equivalent to a monotheistic belief. He recognised not only a Creator of all things, but a vast mind pervading the universe—a Being of benevolence and beneficence dispensing goodness around. He held that the happiness of mankind consisted in conformity to God's moral attributes —purity, rectitude, self-control, uprightness, and truth—thus anticipating the true Gospel theory as enunciated on the Areopagus,—not only the belief that God is, but that He is the "*rewarder* of them that diligently seek Him." Despite, how-

ever, of repudiation in the case of multitudes, it is a doctrine which has been, and still is—dear to the wisest and the best. How the greatest Teachers in every age of Christendom have loved to expatiate upon it! Augustine—the chief of the Latin Fathers, tells us he wrote his well-known treatise ("De Civitate Dei") for the very purpose of counteracting the denial of a ruling Governor and government, which was then sweeping like a flood through the fast dismembering and disintegrating Roman Empire. His thesis was—"A demonstration that the world was controlled by a divine Providence." Hear a very different testimony in our own century, from a distinguished man, and a voice potential as a scientist of his day. "What delight," says the late Lord Brougham, "can be more elevating, more truly worthy of a rational creature's enjoyment, than to feel, wherever we tread the paths of scientific inquiry, new evidence springing up amid our footsteps; —new traces of divine Intelligence and power meeting our eye. We are never alone: at least, like the old Roman, we are never less alone than in our solitude. We walk with Deity. We commune with the Great First Cause, who sustains every instant, what the word of His power made." [1]

[1] Lord Brougham's Discourse on Natural Theology, p. 196.

Though of prior date and of another country,—hear the attestation of a kindred philosopher—the illustrious Benjamin Franklin—"I desire with all humility to acknowledge, that I attribute the happiness of my past life to God's gracious *Providence*, which led me to the means I used, and gave the success. My belief of this induces me to hope, though I must not presume, that the same Goodness will still be exercised towards me in continuing that happiness, or enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done: the complexion of my future fortune being known to Him only, in whose power it is to bless us." "There appears," to glean, once more, from the utterances of the great Missionary-Traveller, "in the quiet repose of earth's scenery, the benignant smile of a Father's love: we may feel that we are leaning on His breast, while living in a world clothed in beauty. We must feel there is a Governor among the nations, who will bring all His plans with respect to our human family to a glorious consummation. He who stays his mind on an ever-present, ever-energetic God, will not fret himself because of evil doers. . . . By different agencies the Great Ruler is bringing all things into focus. . . . The great minds among men are remarkable for the attention they bestow

on *minutiæ*. He who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, condescends to provide for the minutest of our wants with an infinitely more constant care than our own utmost self-love can ever attain unto. With the ever-watchful loving eye ever on me, I may surely go among the heathen." [1]

Happy for those who can personally and individually recognise this divine sovereign rule—a world of moral order: that life is no capricious concurrence or outcome of fortuitous events and circumstances, but a plan of God: that that Lord of all, moreover, is not a God of torpor and inaction—lulled in dreamless inactivity or enthroned in unsympathetic isolation amid the elements He has formed: not a God before whose arbitrary will and semi-human passion His votaries have to crouch in terror: not the Phœnician god—the god of Baal and Astarte: not the Hindoo god with his reserve of awful power and unappeasable thirst of blood: not the Pluto of Homer, described in the Iliad as

> "One who never spares,
> Who knows no mercy and who hears no prayers."

In a word, not a God whose wrath has to be

[1] Livingstone's Missionary Journal. 1867.

appeased and his favour conciliated, but the Great and Gracious One "who is not far from any one of us," who has given, in the bright and glorious pages of Nature, a pledge of the character of His Providential rule. "Our *Father* which art in heaven:" "Like as a *Father* pitieth his children"—"Your *Father* knoweth that ye have need of all these things." If there be at times mystery in His dealings, submissive trust must await the final and ultimate disclosures—the "vindication of the ways of God to man."

> "His plans, like lilies pure and white, unfold.
> We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
> Time will reveal the calyxes of gold."

Having that paternal assurance and guarantee, we are environed on every side with a sense of gracious security: whether it be careering along the great modern highway on its thread of iron; or 'far off upon the sea,' or in the throng of the busy mart, or in the solitude of Canadian wilds, or amid stretches of Australasian pastures: on the bed of sickness, or in the hour of sudden and appalling disaster—"The Lord reigneth." The mighty wheels of Ezekiel's Vision—the symbols alike of a general and particular Providence, are not self-impelled, but God-impelled: *re*volving,

and evolving nothing but good. In that Providential government, wonderful is the combination of infinitude of action with minute supervision of the small, the weak, the insignificant—"Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations: (yet) The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down" (Ps. cxlv. 13, 14).

The word "Kingdom" suggests yet another closing thought. Over and above individual superintendence, we are reminded that this same Providential rule embraces the divine government of *nations*. It is indeed to this, its wider development and acceptation, that Paul seeks specially to engage the attention and assent of his hearers on the Attic Hill:—"All the nations of men on all the face of the earth" (v. 26). This special feature of the theme was by no means novel, or characteristic of the later economy. God—the God of Peoples and Kingdoms, is as fully set forth in the Old Testament as in the New: indeed, much more so. From the story of Joseph and the Pharaohs, the subsequent march through the Sinai-desert—the raising up of Cyrus and Sennacherib as the agents and ministers of His purposes in later ages, and onwards still, we have nothing but

a divine 'programme'—a divine unfolding of the roll and record of Providence. These delegated human instruments were all in ignorance of the Higher forces at work in their mission. Of Cyrus it was said—"I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me" (Isa. xlv. 4). "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger. . . . Howbeit he (Sennacherib) meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so" (Isa. x. 5, 7). But He by whom kings reign "meant so:" He who has the heart of kings in His hands and turneth them even as He turneth the rivers of water, "thought so." These vassal Rulers obey His behests: and then, (as in their pride and arrogance of spirit, like the boastful blaspheming Assyrian, they lift up their hands against the Most High) when they have accomplished their work, He scatters them as chaff before the whirlwind!

In the same way are we, at this hour, bound to trace and recognise His hand in unravelling political complexities; overruling human passions and human wrongs for the furtherance of His own cause on the earth.

"You hear an endless cry that goes
Lamenting through the sombre air,
Of nations bent with many woes,
Or gauntly wrestling with despair:

"You see a world that wildly whirls
Through coiling clouds of battle-smoke,
And drenched with blood the children's curls,
And women's hearts by thousands broke:—

"I see a Host above it all,
Where Angels wield their conquering sword—
And thrones may rise or thrones may fall,
But comes the Kingdom of the Lord."[1]

It is not the vessel without a Pilot—the world without a Ruler:—"HE doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." "HE brings forth the lightning out of His treasuries." "HE gives the sea its decree." "HE walketh on the wings of the wind." "HE maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and restraineth the remainder of His wrath." "The Lord is King. . . . He sitteth between the cherubims, be the earth never so unquiet" (Prayer Book Version). In the impressive symbolism of the Book of Revelation, He sends forth His mission-angels clad "in pure and white linen and having their breasts girded with golden girdles," to execute His mandates. With unswerving loyalty they proceed on their errands as ministers of Providence, executing the behests of the sovereign Ruler, till the final voice comes out of the Temple saying—'It is done:' and they sur-

[1] Alfred Norris.

render their trust by laying their emptied vials at their Lord's feet. There is a fond legend of the ancient Hellenes, that Athene, full-panoplied, on more than one occasion personally led the Greek armies.[1] The fantasy becomes a divine and glorious verity with the great God of Providence. He is the true fiery and cloudy column preceding the march of His Israel of every age, through the wilderness ;—"The Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rereward" (Isa. lii. 12). "He filleth all things. If my eyes were opened I should see at every moment God's love, God's power, God's wisdom, working alike in sun and moon ; in every growing blade and ripening grain, and in the training and schooling of every human being and every nation, to whom He has appointed their times and the bounds of their habitation, if, haply, they may seek after the Lord and find Him" (*Kingsley*).

It is, then, God—as the Supreme God of all, and the Father-God of His people—the Sovereign Disposer, which forms the second great truth which Paul proclaims to Greek ears on the heights

[1] "As when Jupiter," says the Father of Greek poetry, "spreads the purple rainbow over heaven, portending battle or cold storm, so Athene, wrapping herself round with a purple cloud, stooped to the Greek soldiers and raised up each of them."—*Quoted by Mr. Ruskin.*

of Areopagus. It is the same strain which 'the Holy Church throughout all the world' has taken up and echoed down the ages—

"All the Earth doth worship Thee,
the Father Everlasting.
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.

. . . . .

O Lord, save Thy people,
and bless Thine inheritance:
Govern them
and lift them up for ever."

III.

The God of Grace.

"The Christian Religion alone has this peculiarity, that it fully satisfies the noblest faculties and affections of man, and brings with it a calm kind of fear, and confidence accompanying the fear, and love, hope, and joy."—*Bengel.*

"Human nature was reduced to such a state of fetid decay by this rejection of God, that a few more years would have seen the world one gigantic dunghill of corruption and death. Then, the Great Sacrifice took place: God manifest in the flesh died upon the cross, an eternal Sacrifice to take away sin. A fresh, invigorating breeze swept through the putrifying mass of human life. Men faced, for the first time, the realities of existence with an unflinching faith in a divine life. The idea of Sacrifice, which every nation under heaven had conceived, and blindly striven to work out, was fulfilled in the Great Sacrifice."—*Shorthouse,* "*Sir Percival,*" p. 251.

"The miraculous Olive tree has withered away, since that Morning Sun brightened over Bethlehem."—*Syrian Shrines.*

"Eighteen hundred years ago, Jove was discrowned, the pagan heaven emptied of its divinities, and Olympus left to the solitude of its snows. . . . The despairing voice was heard shrieking in the Ægean 'Pan is dead! Great Pan is dead!'"—*Alexander Smith.*

"'Twas the hour when One in Zion
Hung for love's sake on a Cross;
When His brow was chill with dying,
And His soul was faint with loss;
When His priestly blood dropped downward,
And His kingly eyes looked throneward—
Then, PAN WAS DEAD."
—*Mrs. Barrett Browning.*

"Thy Kingdom, O Christ, is an Everlasting Kingdom."
—*Inscription on the Great Mosque of Damascus.*

THE GOD OF GRACE.

The great Apostle reaches now the third topic in his Discourse to the men of Athens. He proceeds to unfold to his hearers things in heaven and earth that were undreamt of in their philosophy. He supplies a new name to their uninscribed Temple-pedestal, and places a Divine all-glorious Sacrifice on their empty altar. With the skill of a sacred Rhetorician, he employs the two preceding themes mainly to lead up to the *Great* Theme. He unfolds the Volume of Grace, on whose title-page is written "*Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*" Where he now stood, the Temple of Mars — the symbol of might — confronted the Temple of Minerva—the symbol of Wisdom. He was about to tell them of One in whom both attributes were united—"Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God."

And yet,—though this was unquestionably the design of the Speaker,—it is at first sight remarkable that the name of Christ does not once occur

throughout the Mars' Hill Sermon. He had indeed fully unfolded that Divine name immediately before in the Agora;—for it is distinctly noted in verse 18,—that the ground on which the Stoic philosophers had impeached him as a babbler, was "because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." The omission, or rather the shortcoming in this his chief purpose, we think can be very readily accounted for. Not only may we infer, as in a previous chapter fully adverted to, that the Discourse itself is epitomised,—but we can still more surely surmise, that any attempted allusion to a theme so distasteful as salvation through a crucified man, proclaimed by an unknown pilgrim from Asia Minor, would be met with pronounced opposition; and that his voice and pleading—as in the case of the protomartyr Stephen, would be drowned in the clamour and uproar. To the congenial theme of *Nature* they could listen with avidity:—to the theme of *Providence* they would at all events hearken with toleration: but to supplant their Parthenon and all the traditions of Olympus and the Acropolis—by the worship of a Jew who had suffered a felon's death—one belonging to a nation they esteemed barbarian,—was in every sense to these proud Hellenes, "foolishness." Accordingly, we find, at the very

close of the address, when indistinct reference is made to "that Man whom He hath ordained," in conjunction with the same theme which had been received with contemptuous scorn under the Stoa Pœcile—"Whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He had raised him from the dead;"—there is no further hearing accorded, or exposition tolerated. With that disjointed and abrupt utterance the Discourse collapses. The "not Jesus"—shouted, years before, by the surging crowd before the Hall of Judgment in Jerusalem, and which drowned in its fierceness the claims of Incarnate Justice, Truth, and Love—was doubtless heard now. We long in vain to know how the great Apostle would have opened up to them, in more definite terms, the double theme here named. That twofold topic was "*the Risen Man.*" A "MAN"—One who combined the alleged might and majesty of their Jove, with the tenderness of a Brother in their nature—the love and sympathy of a human friend! One, moreover, who was to be worshipped and reverenced, not as a mere abstract principle, but as a Risen and Living *Person.* Yes, the subsequent writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians and of the 8th chapter of Romans—he who loved that Christ of Nazareth more than all the world beside,—we might well

desiderate to hear him, before such an audience, discourse on the glories and claims of his Heavenly Master: mounting from step to step in his high argument: telling of the Risen One ascended: seated as a Great High-Priest at the Father's right hand—a glorious King invested with highest honours,—holding the sceptre of universal empire: His people challenging tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword,—the heavens above, and the earth beneath, ever to separate them from His love!

Loud, vehement, irresistible, that opposing clamour undoubtedly must have been; for in other similar recorded experiences in St. Paul's life and work, he was only silenced when protest and resistance on his part had been rendered impossible. At this time, too, it must be remembered, that the better life of Athens had departed. The ancient altars survived, but a practical infidelity was predominant. No "great souls of the olden time" lingered among the present throng on the Areopagus; otherwise a fair hearing, to the last, for the earnest stranger would have been courteously conceded. If Socrates, and such as he, imbued with lofty principle and swayed by generous impulses, with minds open to conviction and recognising only the majesty of truth, had been Paul's

present hearers, who knows but their souls would have opened like the sunflower to the Light of Life!

Doubtless our heroic pleader must have descended these stone steps with a heavy heart. It was one indeed of the few occasions when he felt compelled, not ignominiously to retreat,—but to retire for the time, apparently discomfited. Very possibly it is mainly to this day's experience he makes that subsequent reference in his first letter to the Corinthians already noted, as to how his theme—a crucified Saviour—had by the Greeks been discarded and discredited. His memory of the Agora and Mars' Hill may possibly have mingled with another similar utterance—"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." It was, at all events, to these proud Polytheists, no "faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners."

While, at present, it was with the cultured æsthetic descendants and representatives of Pericles and Pythagoras, Aristotle and Plato, Phidias and Parrhasius he came in contact, they by no means stood alone in their antipathies;—'the offence of the Cross.' The less accomplished but not less

proud Roman was found subsequently to share the same unconquerable opposition to the foundation-truth of Christianity. How could he—the impersonation of martial force and universal dominion: whose eagles had winged their magnificent flight to the ends of the earth: whose Temple of Victory crowned one of the seven hills with its garnered spoils of vanquished nations—how could he stoop to the recognition of a new rival "Power:"—to the avowal that he owed his salvation to one who had undergone the death-sentence reserved for his menial slave? Is this crucified Jew—this dead God, to supersede and supplant his Jove of the Capitol? Are those dreams he shared with the Greek, of Olympus with its deified haunts, and which this day have their memories recalled in the Pantheon on the Tiber, to be denounced as myths and fantasies, giving way to the poor legend of a manger-born babe of Bethlehem—a carpenter of Nazareth—a Pilgrim of Galilee with twelve fishermen as His retainers,—a dying sufferer on Calvary? Is this Man with the marred visage to dispute with Apollo his throne of ideal beauty? Is the crown, alike of Zeus and of the Cæsars, to be put on the head of one who wore a crown of thorns?

But it is not with Imperial Rome but with the

Greek and Athens that we have now to do. And it must be remembered that if there was one thought more terrible and abhorrent than another to the latter, it was that of Death and the world of shades of which it was the portal. With this recoil from the supreme hour and the grave, no wonder one of their favourite Altars in the Temple of Minerva-Polias was erected to "*Oblivion.*" The present was with them everything. In the words of another—"This bright world was all. Its revels —its dances—its theatrical exhibitions—its races —its baths—and academic groves, where literary labour luxuriated,—these were blessedness; and the Greeks' hell was *death.* Their poets speak pathetically of the misery of the wrench from all that is dear and bright. The dreadfulness of death is one of the most remarkable things that meet us in those ancient writings."[1] Now observe it was this theme—"the dead" (*νεκρῶν*)—which in the Apostle's discourse fell on their ears. That was the torch which now fired the loaded mine—the gag which closed the mouth of the fearless Speaker. And though in one sense it was a reference to the grave in its less appalling aspect and association; the grave disarmed of its terrors by resurrection,—it was only to intensify their contempt

[1] Robertson's Sermons, vol. i., p. 190.

for the presumption of the prating babbler, that his crucified "Man" was to determine,—in another sense to reverse, the doom of millions.

Then, add to this, if repellent to the Greek were the thoughts of dissolution, equally repellent to him were thoughts of sin. The Sermon on the Mount, with a few rare exceptions, had no place in his ethical system. The average code of morality, specially in these more degenerate days, may be described as a negation:—the gods and goddesses who shaped his creed, from their own examples readily condoned human infirmities. The heart "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," would have been branded as the exaggerated tenet of an obsolete, old-world belief. They recognised no fall—no devil—no principle of evil—no corrupted nature. Where, then, was the necessity of such alleged 'redemption'?—what the need of atonement and sacrifice?

We can thus well conceive and understand how formidable the opposition was, on that hill-summit, to the doctrines of Grace: to accept the One only divine method of acceptance with God. And yet, without that Gospel of Christ, the world has no satisfactory light thrown on the vast problem of its spiritual regeneration. Oratory, poetry, philosophy, intellect, reason, were all baffled and con-

founded :—professing themselves in this great mystery to be wise, they became fools. The solution of the enigma had been attempted for long generations : but every oracle was dumb on the great question ' What must I do to be saved ? ' The Greek mythology, previously described, of mountains and groves and forests and rivers, was mournfully inadequate. The challenge might be given to their philosophers of every age and every school :—Pile, if you will, mountain on mountain ; ransack all the glories of material Nature ; bring every flower that blooms and every torrent that sweeps in wild music to the sea ; summon old ocean from his deep caverns and the myriad stars that gem the firmament. They may, and do, silently and eloquently speak of God's eternal power and Godhead. But there is one theme on which they have no speech nor language —their voice is not heard, and that is—How is God to deal with my sinful soul ? With regard to this question, "you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."

Is there, then, no answer elsewhere ? Yes, where the Volume of Nature, and I may add, the Volume of Providence, fails, the Volume of Inspiration interposes. The world, as we have seen, had conceded to it long eras to work out, if

it could, its own self-restoration. But after these centuries and ages of failure,—after God had given man his own time and means to attempt discovering what baffled human reason, He says—Now, listen to My own divine expedient,—By lifting up My Beloved Son on the cross I intend to draw all men unto Me.[1]

That "Plan of Salvation," though objection is not unjustly taken to the phrase, is succinctly set forth in what Olshausen happily calls,—and his words have a special appropriateness in these pages —"the Acropolis of the Christian faith:"—"Whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26). Christ 'the power of God unto salvation:' Christ who had, by His dying, disarmed death of its terrors and made it the portal of a higher life—the vestibule of a better than their best Elysian dream: lifting it far above the poor 'χαῖρε' (the farewell)—touching but significant note of the sorrow of their bereaved:—Christ who had "delivered them who through fear of death

[1] St. Paul in Rome, p. 112-116.

were all their lifetime subject to bondage" :—here is the fulcrum and lever in one, which is to elevate humanity: which is to overthrow time-honoured religions—subvert philosophies—silence oracles—demolish Pantheons—save immortal souls!—the old old story of Redeeming Grace to dying men and a dying world. St. Paul felt the transforming power of that cross in his own heart. He might be vilified as a revolutionary fanatic, an impious antagonist to time-worn religions, a subverter of faiths which were hoary with age—"turning the world upside down:"—but he delighted to tell that experience to others—it mattered not to him whether in the slums of Corinth or in the halls of Cæsar, or on the heights of Mars' Hill—"The chief of sinners, but I obtained mercy."—

"See me! see me! once a rebel,
Vanquished at His cross I lie;
Cross! to tame earth's proudest able,
Who was e'er so proud as I?
He convinced me; He subdued me;
He chastised me; He renewed me.
The nails that nailed—the spear that slew Him,
Transfixed my heart and bound it to Him.
See me! see me!—once a rebel,
Vanquished at His cross I lie."

I may appropriately end this chapter and its theme with the remark,—how superlative the glory of Christianity is, compared with the most refined

and captivating systems of heathenism. I shall not here enter on so wide a topic as the modern theory of development in the religions of the world: or how far they served, even in their very failures, to act as pioneers in the ushering in of the great secret hid from ages and generations. May we not even subscribe to the words of a true Poet,—that Beauty and the Beautiful in the glorious art of Greece, may have partially and unconsciously prepared the way for the only true and complete Incarnation of Divine Beauty,—the "Altogether Lovely One:"—

> "By your beauty, which confesses
> Some chief Beauty conquering you,—
> By our grand heroic guesses
> Through your falsehood at the True,—
> We will weep not! earth shall roll
> Heir to each god's aureole." [1]

We can speak with greater confidence of her "harbinger philosophers." Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and others already spoken of, were at least the heralds of a diviner faith. The deeper instincts of St. Augustine's nature, he himself tells us, were first aroused by reading accidentally a passage in the Hortentius of Cicero. Its topic was the dignity and grandeur of philosophy. There followed, indeed, a barren and ineffectual conflict of eleven

[1] Mrs. Barrett Browning.

years terminating with acceptance of the principles and speculations of Manichæism. And though it was the teachings of Ambrose at Milan which came like sunlight in his darkness, yet we have it recorded in his Confessions, that the writings of Plato "enkindled in his mind an incredible ardour," and stimulated him to profounder study of the diviner philosophy taught on the Mount of Beatitudes and by the shores of the Lake of Galilee. For a time there was an attempt to incorporate the two principles. He sought to be a disciple of a hybrid system—a Platonic Christianity. But, ere long, the victory of the Judean faith was complete, and he cordially accepted—what was incompatible with the tenets of the Athenian sage—the doctrine of a Personal God and a Living Saviour. We willingly allow—say in the three ancient religions of the East, Brahminism, Buddhism, and Parsism—that there were scattered and fragmentary rays of a better sun—lights shining in a dark place, amid monstrous fables, gross as well as puerile forms of error. Nay, farther, the question seriously discussed in the present writer's youth—under the repellent phraseology—"Salvability of the heathen"—now happily in the judgment of Christian charity, as well as of Scripture, remains no longer an open

question. Though with certain qualifications, the words of an earnest thinker and writer may be accepted and endorsed:—"We are constrained to the conviction that there is a church on earth larger than the limits of the church visible; larger than Jew, or Christian, or the Apostle Peter dreamed; larger than our narrow hearts dare to hope even now. They whose soarings to the First Good, First Perfect, and first Fair, entranced us in our boyhood, and whose healthier aspirations are acknowledged yet as our instructors in the reverential qualities of our riper manhood—will our hearts *allow* us to believe that they have perished? Nay. Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. . . . These, with an innumerable multitude whom no man can number, out of every kingdom and tongue and people, with Rahab and the Syro-Phœnician woman, have entered into that church which has passed through the centuries, absorbing silently into itself all that the world ever had of great and good and noble. They were those who fought the battle of good against evil in their day, penetrated into the invisible from the thick shadows of darkness which environed them, and saw the open vision which is manifested to all in every nation,

who fear God and work righteousness. To all, in other words, who live devoutly towards God, and by love towards men. And they shall hereafter 'walk in white, for they are worthy.'"[1]

At present, however, we are concerned alone with the nation which, of all others of the past, led the van in the struggles and aspirations of unassisted Reason, and which even in her Incarnations had been the Precursor in the great outstanding fact of the Gospel—"the mystery of godliness—manifest in the flesh." The Greek ritual has been well described, with all its external fascinations, as at best a feeble yearning after the good and the true, with much that was meretri-

[1] Robertson of Brighton and his Contemporaries, p. 317.

"I do not doubt that, according to the teaching of our Lord and St. Paul, many of those who never heard of Christ will yet be saved by the mighty power of His Incarnation and atonement and resurrection."—*Dr. Harold Brown, Bishop of Winchester.*

"It is with peculiar thankfulness that I mark your Lordship's expression of opinion as to the extension of the Merits of the Incarnation and Atonement to the Mahomedan and the Buddhist who in this life never heard of Christ."—*Canon Wilberforce.* See both quotations: *Times*, January 27th, 1887.

We may well add words of tolerance more authoritative still than those of any modern ecclesiastical dignitaries, however eminent. The Leader of the Apostolic band—St. Peter himself, places upon record the following judgment. From the language employed, it is evident that at his own avowal he was startled. It was in contravention of his life-long tenets and prejudices. But, "being of God he cannot deny it." Mark his expression of undissembled astonishment yet of ready acceptance: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts x. 34, 35).

cious and corrupting—base and seductive. Dean Plumptre in his suggestive Commentary, after speaking of it as "the inarticulate wailing of childhood," happily applies the familiar words of the Laureate—

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

It was a groping in the dark—the blind man's feeling after Him—spoken of in verse 27th. The three words Mystery—Ambiguity—Uncertainty—describe its best teaching and attainment. There was the conspicuous absence of clear and decisive tone and utterance on the great problems of Life, Death, Immortality. "All the systems of ancient mythology and of modern superstition," says an eloquent preacher, "have their reserve and their mysteriousness. Alike at Delphi and Dodona, at Mecca and at Rome, there are secrets for the initiated—responses sounding through a hollow cave, or from behind a curtaining veil—all opinions regulated by a supreme will, all knowledge kept by a custodian priest, and doled out at his pleasure to the submissive people of his charge. The appeal is to the senses rather than to the conscience—veiled prophets, and Pythian madness, and flashing scimitars. . . . Christianity has no

lack of inherent grandeur, and therefore needs not borrow. She has no muttering wizards that peep in the pauses of their necromancy from out the holy shrine. She deals not in 'deceivableness of unrighteousness, nor lying wonders.' She seeks not, by ceremonies of terror, to cause the timid to crouch before her altars, nor by idle pageants to dazzle the sensuous into devotees. She announces in simple language, the sublimest truth. . . . Standing in the majesty of her Truth, she says to all men, 'Come and see.' . . . Toil not so wearily, ye hapless ones—here is Rest. Jesus stands in the way of all hearts that inquire, turns to meet any eager footstep which follows Him; and whether the inquirer be a king in his purple, or a beggar in his rags, a sage of many-wintered years, or childhood with its 'prayer-clasped hands,' He greets them with the welcome of His grace."[1]

While we concede then, as we may, whatever is bright and beautiful in the myths and mysteries of ancient Greece as compared to the cults of other peoples, such as Egypt or Phœnicia—Osiris and Baal:—while, in the words of so safe a guide as the late excellent and scholarly Dean Howson—"Plato and Aristotle have had a great

[1] Morley Punshon's Sermons, p. 11.

work appointed to them, not only as the heathen pioneers of the Truth before it was revealed, but as the educators of Christian minds in every age,"[1] let it only serve to bring out, in bolder and more accentuated contrast—"the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). Greece, in the Homeric phrase, had her boasted "Shepherds of the people;" some of these beautiful in outward form—ideal incarnations. But what were they compared to "the Beautiful Shepherd" (*lit.* John x. 14) who gave His own life for the sheep: not haunting the groves or environed with the clouds of Olympus, but an ever present—ever living—ever loving Redeemer. These yearnings after the true *summum bonum* of the Platonic Philosophy, doubtless had their nearest fulfilment—the highest eminence to which human reason could reach—in the case of him whose name has so often occurred to us in these pages—the noble Socrates: who in the words of Cicero "brought down philosophy from heaven to earth." How Christ-like are many of his aphorisms! "The only road to happiness is to do right." "Follow wisdom and virtue: for the

[1] Dean Stanley, in speaking of the Eastern Churches of the present century, remarks, that "along the church porticoes, both in Greece and Russia, are to be seen portrayed on the walls, the figures of Homer, Theucidides, Pythagoras, and Plato."—*Eastern Churches*, p. 41.

reward is noble, and the life is great." "Cultivate, in preference to honours and advancement, the pleasures arising from the performance of duty." "O beloved Pan and all ye other Gods of this city," was one of his sayings when confronting death as recorded in the same Phædo of Plato, "grant me to become beautiful in the inner man,—that so, whatever I may possess outwardly, I may be at peace with those within." "His soul," says Tholuck in a striking passage quoted by Howson and Conybeare,—"was certainly in some alliance with the Holy God; he certainly felt in his dæmon or guardian spirit, the inexplicable nearness of his Father in heaven; but he was destitute of a view of the divine nature in the humble form of a servant, the Redeemer with the crown of thorns; he had no ideal conception of that true holiness, which manifests itself in the most humble love and the most affectionate humility. Hence, also, he was unable to become fully acquainted with his own heart, though he so greatly desired it. Hence, too, he was destitute of any deep humiliation and grief on account of his sinful wretchedness, of that true humility which no longer allows itself a biting, sarcastic tone of instruction; and destitute, likewise, of any filial devoted love. These perfections can be shared

only by the Christian, who beholds the Redeemer, as a wanderer upon earth in the form of a servant; and who receives in his own soul the sanctifying power of that Redeemer by intercourse with Him." Yes, it is at the foot of the cross and there alone,—pondering and accepting the story of Grace, that the long cry of aching humanity has been answered: a remedy for its ills provided: rest secured for the weary and heavy-laden: life sanctified and transfigured with the beauties of holiness: Death, the Greek's enemy, despoiled of its sting and the grave of its victory. Universal Christendom can well echo through the ages, her lofty *Benedicite*—

"Thou art the King of glory, O Christ:
Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father:
When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man,
Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb:
When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death,
Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers!"

IV.

The God of Judgment.

"It is frequently possible for men to screen themselves from the penalty of human laws: but no man can be unjust or ungrateful, without suffering for his crime. Hence I conclude that these laws must have proceeded from a more excellent legislator than man."—*Socrates.*

"Thou, attended gloriously from heaven,
Shalt in the sky appear, and from Thee send
Thy summoning archangels, to proclaim
Thy dread tribunal."

—*Paradise Lost, Book* iii.

"Four things belong to a Judge: to hear graciously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and decide impartially. . . . Pray to the Gods, that my departure hence may be happy."—*Socrates.*

"Oh who shall bear, the blinding glare
Of the Majesty that shall meet us there?
What eye may gaze on the unveiled blaze
Of the light-girdled Throne of the Ancient of Days?
. . . . . .
Christ us aid!—Himself be our Shade,
That in that Dread Day we be not dismayed!"

—*Whytehead.*

THE GOD OF JUDGMENT.

The great Apostle has now reached the last theme—the peroration of his fourfold discourse,—God, the God of Judgment; and the sisting of the world at His righteous bar.

"Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (v. 31).

It is almost unnecessary to say that a "tribunal" was not strange to Greek or Athenian. As we now well know, the very spot where St. Paul stood was hoary with recollections of the highest and most ancient of these. We have, in an earlier part of this Volume, spoken of the marble seats, even then venerable with age, on which the circle of the Areopagite judges sat, with a corresponding stone for the accused. So that the

Apostle's judicial emblem could hardly fail to be suggestive to his hearers.[1]

Nor were the Athenians conversant alone with an earthly court of criminal jurisdiction, where retribution for crime was meted out to delinquents. They recognised arraignment also at the supreme though invisible bar of conscience—the arbiter of right and wrong. They avowed their sense of individual responsibility, and indeed had clothed the moral accompaniments and results of crime in incarnate shape. For, as already also noted in our topographical description,—the Cave of the Furies was close by: its eastern opening being under the very hill on which the august conclave was now assembled. These 'Erinnyes'—avengers—were supposed, even in the present world, to inflict punishment on the transgressor. With their knotted thongs they were the living impersonators of the old Hebrew aphorism—"And be sure your sin will find you out." The poet Æschylus represents them as standing on the brow of the Areopagus, and singing together the following doleful ditty:—

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1 "'*He is about to judge*' (Μέλλει κρίνειν). This is appropriately said in the Areopagus, where justice and judgment used to be dispensed."—*Bengel.*

"For fate supreme ordains that we,
This office hold for evermore:
Mortals, imbued with kindred gore
We scathe till under earth they flee:
And when in death
They yield their breath,
In Hades still our thralls they be."[1]

There was of course a similar 'recompense of reward' which they held to be meted out on earth to the deserving. The "righteousness," or equity, spoken of immediately by the Apostle, had its twofold application. Indeed the statue of Athene enshrined, as previously described, in one of the Temples which confronted him, was the embodiment of this double thought in magnificent sculpture. "In her justice, which is the dominant virtue, she wears two robes, one of light and one of darkness; the robe of light, saffron-colour, or the colour of the day-break, falls to her feet, covering her wholly with favour and love,—the calm of the sky in blessing; it is embroidered along its edge with her victory over the giants. . . . Then, her robe of indignation is worn on her breast and left arm only, fringed with fatal serpents, and fastened with gorgonian cold, turning men to stone; physically the lightning and the hail of chastisement by storm."[2] Nor

[1] *Orestes*, quoted by Dr. Porter.
[2] Ruskin's Queen of the Air, p. 14.

can we restrict this thought of penal vengeance or its opposite to the present life. However repudiated by Epicurean or Stoic, a future retributive economy was accepted by many, alike among the illustrious and the common people. If we take Plato as certainly one of the purest and loftiest of her philosophic thinkers,—he holds, first of all, that the soul, emancipated from its mortal material tenement, is incapable of decay or dissolution. In his various writings, but specially in his Phædo, the unique and remarkable dialogue, purporting to describe the last hours of Socrates—the doctrine of Immortality is clearly unfolded: that at death, the body is resolved into its original dust; but its inextinguishable tenant continues to live in an unembodied state and under new conditions. We may recall the familiar lines of Addison in his "Cato's Soliloquy:"—

> "It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well—
> Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after Immortality?
> Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
> Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
> Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
> 'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;
> 'Tis Heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
> And intimates eternity to man."

In like manner Pindar, among the poets of

Greece, now and then presents bright and unexpected glimpses of the world beyond the grave: not the gloomy and unlovable region depicted by Homer, Æschylus, and Sophocles. Nor do Plato and kindred spirits—(the ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι)—receive and promulgate only the doctrine of a beatified future. They are equally clear and pronounced on a state of coming equitable punishment—"punishments partly penal, partly purgatorial; some temporary and some without end." The doom of Sisyphus, the son of Æolus, with his toilsome and monotonous infliction, will occur to most of us as described in Pope's well-known lines. The block of stone or boulder with which it was alleged he had committed his savage murders in Ephyra, was made the instrument of penal recompense in the infernal regions. In its ceaseless upheaval from the base to the summit of a mountain, we have set forth, in a strange myth, the Greek idea of equity in the after retribution.

> "Up the high hill he heaved the huge round stone;
> The huge round stone, resultant with a bound,
> Thundered impetuous down, and smoked along the ground."

While, on the other hand, may be found in other poets of Hellas, as we have already specially

noted in the case of Pindar, golden legends of the bliss awaiting as a recompense the lives of the brave and virtuous, the good and the true, in regions where the light of Grecian skies, and the beauty of fields enamelled with Grecian flowers, were perpetuated. Confirming what we have just said, the 'mysteries' of the Greeks, in the words of another, "owed their attractiveness and influence in part at least to this, that the hierophant professed to lead the initiated on to the contemplation of things after death. Popular mythology spoke of Minos and Rhadamanthus, and the Elysian fields, and Tartarus and Acheron, and Phlegethon, the fiery river and the Lethe of forgetfulness. The eleventh book of Odyssey brought before men the thought, that in that other world they would recognise those whom they had known on earth, and 'see the great Achilles whom they knew.' The elegiac song on Hermodius led them to think of the souls of patriots and heroes as in 'the island of the blessed.' Plato, who saw in these popular legends at least the parables and symbols of eternal truths, was never weary . . . of bringing them before men's minds, as being more than merely mythical." [1]

But with all this "feeling after it," St. Paul in his

[1] Dean Plumptre's Studies on the Life after Death, p. 394.

present address invests the great theme of a future retributive economy with entirely new features of solemnity and distinctiveness; indeed equivalent, in the ears of his hearers, to a new revelation. Specially so in these two factors;—that there was to be *a Resurrection of the body;* and that the place of a Judge was to be filled, and the functions of Judge discharged *by a Man:*—A Man once crucified, but who had been raised from the dead as the pledge of the resurrection of His redeemed people. These two 'counts' were specially obnoxious, for reasons stated at length in a previous part of this Volume, to the representatives of both philosophic sects in his present audience:—the Epicureans, who retorted on the assertion with mocking ('some mocked'): and the Stoics, who, less noisy and defiant, relegated the discussion to some indefinite future—"We will hear thee again of this matter" (v. 32).

(1.) *The Resurrection of the dead!*—the old perplexing mystery and query: "Son of man, can these bones live?" This was a doctrine with which Paul was himself familiar before his conversion to Christianity from the writings of his own ancestral seers (see specially Dan. xii. 2, and Isaiah: *passim*); but which was brought to full

light in the Gospel, and by the teachings of Death's great Abolisher: that the vile body re-suscitated, and redeemed from the dishonours of the grave, will be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious and glorified body,—a spiritual yet corporeal being, freed from all the clogs and hamperings of the present.

How we long, here again, had his auditory granted him the opportunity, to have listened to the full unfolding of the Apostle's great theme of which Nature and Providence had been the first instalment. No gap in sacred story do we miss more, and with a sanctified curiosity desire more to have filled up. We have it indeed in another sense supplied to us. That noblest of chapters and dissertations—the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians—written subsequently, at the close of his three years' residence at Ephesus, gives us, in rare and cogent impressiveness, the theme in the very form he would have been likely to present it to the philosophic sceptics of Athens. In writing that chapter, may he not possibly have had our now familiar group of Epicurean and Stoic before his mental eye,—their metaphysical and scientific doubts as to the possibility of a bodily resurrection:—or rather, how utterly in

defiance of all natural and physical laws would be the reconstruction of "the machines of carbon and hydrogen" spoken of by later scientists. The latter half of that chapter, though most sacredly familiar to us all—is so cogent and irresistible an answer to what was burning in the minds of the intellectual throng on the Hill of Judgment, that we must be pardoned inserting it in full:—

"*But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain,*[1]

[1] That remarkable episode in Gospel story will here be recalled, where certain *Greeks*—Proselytes of the Gate—on the occasion of their attendance in Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover, came to Philip of Bethsaida—attracted probably by his Greek name—with the request—"Sir, we would see Jesus." A portion of Christ's reply is worthy of note, in which He adopts the same similitude of the "bare grain." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John xii. 24). "Observe, in the announcement and enforcement of a great truth, He goes, not to the Volume of Prophecy (this He might have done, and probably would have done, had He been discoursing to Jews alone). But in the presence of these Greeks He turns to pages better understood by them: and allows Nature through her simplest processes, to speak and unfold the impending mystery. He brings before them the familiar parable of the seed-corn dropped into the earth; showing how life comes out of death—a new and more exuberant growth springing from the destruction of the inserted grain."—*See my 'Communion Memories,'* p. 3.

it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have

borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound); and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (vers. 35–57).

(2.) Still more repugnant, however, to all their conceptions of "the world to come" was the idea propounded by the present speaker to his audience of a Day, in which all its nations and individuals were to be judged by an "ordained Man"—a

Man once crucified, but now glorified.[1] The *principle* upon which the adjudications were to be conducted was not strange to many of them or to the best of them. We have just noted it in the illustrative though mythological case of Sisyphus. Indeed the "in righteousness" or "equity" spoken of by St. Paul is the very word (δικαιοσύνη) used by Plato descriptive of one of his "two great virtues." But the idea of its application :—these equitable awards, whether punitive or the reverse, being dispensed at the hand of a once lowly-born Jew, was something that conflicted with "the pride of life." Those who had no religion would scorn it as a poor myth, a crude and unworthy hallucination. Those again with instincts of piety, and regard for the nation's religion, would denounce it as a sacrilegious insult, enough to bring down on their devoted heads and devoted city the wrath of the whole Olympic Pantheon. The worshippers of Jupiter, Minerva, and Apollo, could not be expected to hail with the reverential joy of this converted Israelite these grand and comforting words of his great national Prophet—"A MAN shall be as an hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest: as rivers of water in a dry

[1] See Gospel references, John v. 22, 27, 28, 29.

place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. xxxii. 2).[1]

There is one speciality about this fourth theme in the Apostle's address not to be forgotten; for it must have enkindled his whole soul as he sought to unfold it.

His own strong personal belief undoubtedly at this time—though modified in his subsequent letters, was, that the Day of Judgment and the coming of the ordained Man were imminent. We know that the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians was written at Corinth, if not indeed at Athens itself, almost immediately after his discourse on the heights of Mars' Hill:—possibly a few days,

[1] I may here be permitted, in a note, to give the words of a gifted friend in unfolding the characteristics of Christ as the Judge of mankind. "We may gather the principles on which He will proceed hereafter, from what we read of His character and dealings during His ministry upon earth. A general view of the four gospels convinces us that He has all the essential qualifications of a good and just Judge. He is *omniscient*, penetrating the secrets of the heart, stripping men of all their disguises and professions, regarding what they *are* rather than what they *say*, noting all the hidden workings of their minds and imaginations,—whether of evil or of good. He is *impartial*, regarding not the person of man, equally accessible to the rich and to the poor, taking no account of rank or wealth or respectability, or birth, as prejudicing a case. He is *righteous*, having a full knowledge of the requirements of God's law, having a keen sense of God's honour, and of what is due to Him from the children of men; knowing what human duty is, not theoretically only but practically, having Himself taken our human nature upon Him, and having become obedient even unto death; though He were a Son, yet learning obedience by the things which He suffered. Lastly, He is *merciful* and *loving*. Mercy is rightly called by us *humanity;* for it is one

or, at most, a few weeks intervened. Any one carefully reading that letter, cannot fail to be struck with the constant reiteration of the theme of the Second Advent. The exhortation given, as if inspired by his last permitted words on the Areopagus, is to "wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come" (i. 10). His earnest hope is, that "He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints" (iii. 13). Then, in that beautiful adjuration to those in the Corinthian Church who were mourning their 'loved and lost.'

of the purest and most beautiful parts of human nature, being itself the reflection of the nature of God. Jesus Christ by every deed and word testified that His heart was full of love for His fellow-men, into whose brotherhood He had entered, in order to carry out His Father's loving work of Redemption. . . . Even at the time of His greatest suffering, when His life of grief and sorrow was drawing towards its solemn conclusion, He could heal the man whose ear was smitten by Peter, He could cast a look of warning and pity upon that same disciple when denied by him, He could turn to the women who followed Him, and say, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves,' He could ask His Father to pardon the ignorant men who crucified Him, He could provide for his own desolate and sorrowing Mother before His decease, and He could cheer up the dying moments of the penitent thief by the blessed utterance, 'Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.'

"Such is the nature, and such the character, of the Judge of all the earth, —a character worthy of the sublime task, and one which the conscience of all men, when brought before the throne, must needs approve of."—*Canon Girdlestone's Dies Iræ.*

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (iv. 13–18.)

How solemnly, from such considerations, must St. Paul have felt now, as he endeavoured to open up this culminating theme of his prayers and joys!—that "glorious appearing" which would free him from all the manifold toils—heroically endured, of his apostolic earthly calling, and restore him to many in the true 'Elysium' who regarded him as their spiritual father! Above all, the bliss of seeing Him who had as yet only appeared to him

in vision, but who was so soon to be revealed in full, glorious, everlasting fruition. With this "blessed hope" thus dominating every other,—we can understand with what sublime indifference he would regard 'temples made with hands,' with their impending doom of destruction:—that he would have the one overmastering reflection as given in the words of his brother St. Peter—"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Pet. iii. 11–13.)

August and elevating prospect! the final "*Parousia*," whether near or distant! The "Parousia;"—not the Pantheistic idea of 'absorption in the soul of the world;'—not the Bema of one city or nation, but of every tribe and tongue and people of mankind, occupied by a divine *Personality*,—an adored and glorified Brother-man. We can, once more, revert to the Great "*Epinikion*"—the accepted Hymn of Triumph of all hymnals

and all churches,—the grandest uninspired strain that ever rose from earth to heaven: whose majestic cadences will only cease when blended with the Halleluia-chorus of eternity :—

"Thou sittest at the right hand of God
In the glory of the Father.
We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge.
We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants
Whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood:
Make them to be numbered with Thy saints
In Glory Everlasting."

Part III.

EPILOGUE.

Epilogue.

"Nowhere did Paul teach with less fruit resulting than at Athens: nor is it strange, seeing that there were in that city a kind of din and covert of Philosophers, who always stood forth a most immediate and deadly bane to true piety."—*Bullinger.*

"Throughout the Eastern Church, the Nicene Creed is still the one bond of Faith. It is still recited in its original tongue by the peasants of Greece. . . . It is her privilege to claim a direct continuity of speech with the earliest times; to boast of reading the whole code of Scripture, Old as well as New, in the language in which it was read and spoken by the Apostles. The humblest peasant who reads his Septuagint or Greek Testament in his own mother tongue on the hills of Bœotia" (or it might be added on Hymettus or Parnes) "may proudly feel that he has an access to the original Oracles of divine truth which Pope and Cardinal reach by a barbarous and imperfect translation; that he has a key of knowledge which in the West is only to be found in the hands of the learned classes."—*Dean Stanley's Eastern Church,* pp. 17, 68.

"We read in the ruin of these Temples of Athens and in the total extinction of the Religion to which they were dedicated, an Apology in behalf of Christianity and a refutation of Paganism, more forcible and eloquent than any of those which were composed and presented to the Roman Emperor by Aristides and Quadratus."—*Wordsworth's Greece,* p. 187.

EPILOGUE.

HAVING, in the foregoing portion of this Volume, described in detail the Discourse of St. Paul spoken in the fairest of old world cities, it will be desirable for the completion of our subject, to note, first of all, the result of his appeals at the time: then to trace any after consequences of his visit to the Athenian capital, with a few references to the subsequent history of the church he there founded, down to the present era.

We have noted in its place, the instantaneous arrest put on the Apostle's speech, so soon as he ventured to make allusion to the uncongenial and distasteful subject of the Resurrection of the Body: that the Epicureans, to whom such a dogma was peculiarly repellent, broke into open jeers and mocking as the Jews had done at Pentecost: while the Stoics, without altogether expressing final and defiant rejection, intimated their desire to have the discussion postponed for some future occasion. That deferred occasion, however, never came. Paul, as

also previously remarked, from other incidents in his apostolic career, was not easily daunted. If he had any good ground for being sanguine as to future success, it may be averred with certainty he would have been the last to sound a retreat. But soon became apparent the hopelessness of the present struggle. The foolishness of the Greek polytheism was too strong for the simplicity of the faith of Jesus. It was his first and last encounter with his volatile hearers on Mars' Hill:—"*So Paul departed from among them*" (ver. 33). It indicates an insuperable antagonism on the part of his opponents. Corinth, the city to which he now bent his steps was, in point of morality, far beneath Athens. It was one of those commercial marts where vice and wealth together were confederate on the side of evil. Yet thither, we know, he subsequently returned. He planted there a flourishing church: he wrote two long letters—containing, amid matter for his grave reprehension, some of the purest and loftiest and most precious of his teaching. There was no such epistle written to the Athenians. We have already observed in the former chapter, that the Apostle wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians either, in accordance with the words added by our old translators, at Athens: or, far more probably, immediately after he reached

Corinth. That Epistle, the first of all his thirteen, is full of generous congratulation—almost laudation—to his beloved converts in the northern city —"the unceasing remembrance of their work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (i. 3). Can we for a moment suppose that if his heart had been in any degree cheered with his work in the capital, he would have failed to embody a distinct reference to it in this communication to another city of Greece? On the contrary, would it not have been the most natural outcome of a soul like his, to tell of his moral and spiritual victories in the great intellectual and philosophic stronghold:—planting the banner of his dear Lord on the heights of Areopagus and Acropolis—and inviting the earnest prayers of the Thessalonian Church in behalf of the converts? There is not so much as a word of allusion. The Athenian visit is conspicuous and notable only by his silence regarding it. Perhaps it was the mournful and discouraging contrast which dictated the opening words in the second chapter —"For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto *you*, that it was not in vain" (ii. 1). Read that letter. It looks as if its writer had come from the blustering storms and cold icebergs of a northern sea, and found himself, once more, in

genial climes and amid summer gales. The same observation may be made regarding his priceless letter to the Romans, written also and sent from the city of the Greek Isthmus. Many of its sublime comments and teachings may have been dictated and inspired by the memories of this very day on Mars' Hill, when, even to the keen-eyed Apostle, a new revelation was made of "the hardened and impenitent heart" (Rom. ii. 5).

The same occasion may have given birth to another kindred reflection—"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14).

Yet his work was not altogether barren and fruitless. If he could produce no such muster-roll as in other, even unpromising scenes and spheres of his ministry; two names, at all events, are recorded to evidence that his apostolic ministry, here as elsewhere, would not be in vain,—the "germ" of a possible future reaping, by other sickles. One of the members of the venerable court was unable 'to resist the wisdom with which he spake.' It would doubtless expose the illustrious Proselyte to the cynical observations and condemnation of his brother

Judges. But "Dionysius the Areopagite," undeterred by the certain forfeiture of power and position, fearlessly espouses the cause of the followers and votaries of a crucified Redeemer. A female, probably of distinction, since her name is given (Damaris), was the sole representative of the other sex converted to the faith of Christ. If we adopt the surmise of Stier, from her breaking through the seclusion of Grecian women and joining the public crowd,—she may have been another Magdalene,—who in penitence and tears cast herself at the foot of the cross. Much less probable is the suggestion of Chrysostom—that she was the wife of Dionysius: for which there is no ground whatever, save that their names are associated in the narrative. "And others with them:" probably some of smaller note; but doubtless not less ardent and sincere in their adhesion to the truth as it is in Jesus. The idea which Raphael has embodied in his dignified and impressive rendering of "St. Paul preaching at Athens," was, we may well believe, no exaggeration. Rather, it was a conception as true, as it was altogether unique and worthy of his genius. He brings before us a circle of philosophic and other hearers, gathered around the Jewish Teacher. The figures on the extreme left of the cartoon are the repre-

sentatives of defiant scepticism. They frown with undisguised indignation at the bold and innovating utterances. As we progress to the right—there is manifested a willingness to listen. The next in the group are arrested:—the next convinced: and the semicircle terminates with the stretched-out hand of perfect faith and joy in believing.[1] We dare not set limits to the energising power of that 'Word' which has ever proved mighty in "the casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." "Who, indeed, can tell what precious seed may have then been sown among those who hung on the lips of the Servant of Jesus? Who can tell what thoughts they may have carried away with them to their homes, as they remembered the closing sentences of the solemn appeal, that 'God had appointed a day in which He would judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He had ordained'? The expression used regarding Paul's few Athenian converts is worthy of note—'Howbeit certain men *clave* unto him.' It must have cost them a strong effort to be wrenched away from an idolatry to

[1] An aged friend, many years ago, directed the writer's attention to this treatment in the famous picture.

which they were so attached; but having made the bold resolution to forsake all and follow Jesus, their faith was strong, and they were enabled 'to *cleave* to the Lord with full purpose of heart.'"[1]

To recur for a moment to the principal convert, who manifested his willingness to surrender the pride and prestige of an Areopagite. It implied far more than the forfeiture of Hindoo caste, to say, with the heroic resolution of his future Master—"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. iii. 8). There might be much, and doubtless there *was* much, in these 'Temples made with hands,' on all sides, that would make him sever with reluctance from his ancestral faith: but a better and more glorious promise was his in reversion:—"Him that overcometh will I make a *Pillar* in the Temple of My God: and He shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God" (Rev. iii. 12). Nothing farther is known of Dionysius, save what may be gleaned from the uncertainties of tradition. Is is recorded by Eusebius, on the authority of the Bishop of Corinth, that he was ordained subsequently by the hands of Paul as Bishop of Athens (Euseb., Hist. iii. 4).

[1] My 'Footsteps of St. Paul,' p. 225.

And according to a later tradition given by Aristides the Apologist, himself a convert—he is farther said, like many other of these early adherents of the faith, to have crowned his labours with an heroic martyrdom; being burnt alive in the same city, in the year 93. During the subsequent centuries, his name acquired a fictitious celebrity as an author. A lengthy mystical Dissertation on 'the Hierarchy of Heaven' attributed to him is still extant; but which was undoubtedly the forgery of a later date. Even up to the era of the Reformation these writings were accepted as genuine, and possessed a great influence in the Middle Ages. The time and labour of such men as Dean Colet were needlessly expended on the frauds of some Neo-Platonists of the sixth century. "Now"—to use the words of another—"we see him only in his little niche like some statue of a forgotten saint."[1]

If we can glean from some uncertain historic references, the Church at Athens seems to have dwindled almost to extinction during the second century; but to have rallied about A.D. 165. Its members

[1] See Smith's Dic. of Bible, Art. 'Dionysius.'

His name is supposed by some to have been transformed into the St. Denys of France. There is a R. C. church, St. Denis, in the Rue de l'Université in Paris. It may be farther added, that a church, though not pointed out to the present writer, is said to be dedicated to him on the modern Athenian Areopagus. commemorating his conversion.—*New Test. for E. Readers. Also Dr. Porter.*

were "distinguished for their peaceable demeanour, and contrasted favourably with the turbulence of the pagan population" (Leake). At the great Council of Nice, it had its representative Bishop. Gregory of Nazianzen and St. Basil owed their learning to the religious Teachers in its schools.[1] It was not probably till the middle of the sixth century that the heathen temples were converted into Christian sanctuaries. The long famous schools were, shortly after, closed by an edict of Justinian. The Parthenon—the House of the Virgin Athene—came to be dedicated as a church to St. Mary, the Virgin, honoured and reverenced by Christendom. In this, the central jewel of the ancient capital—what was figuratively called "the boss of its golden shield"—homage, through her, was done to the Son of God and Saviour of the world.[2] It may be of interest farther to record, that "a Florentine, named Nerio Acciajuoli, seized

[1] Constantine the Great gloried in the title which had been conferred upon him of "General of Athens." He seems to have been gratified still more by a statue decreed and erected to him there by the people. He testified his pleasure by sending a yearly gratuity of grain.—*Encyclop. Br.*, *Art.* '*Athens.*'

[2] "The Parthenon then became a church consecrated to the same Ἁγία Σοφία, or divine Intelligence, of which the Virgin Goddess had been a personification: while Theseus was exchanged for the Christian hero George of Cappadocia." The same writer mentions that "when afterwards the Parthenon was converted in 1456 from a church into a mosque it appears to have been dedicated to the "*Panaghia.*"—*Colonel Leake's Topography of Athens, Introduc.*, pp. 61, 62. Doubtless the cause of the symmetrical

the capital of Greece in the fourteenth century. Ladislas, King of Naples, granted him, by patent, the title of Duke of Athens. But, about the same time, the luckless ruler was seized by a band of Navarrese troops, who only granted their captive his liberty on paying a heavy ransom. Part of this he obtained by rifling the churches, and even selling the silver plates off the doors of St. Mary's (the Parthenon). Soon after, he died, and in the most remarkable part of his will, he bequeathed the city of Athens to the Temple of the Virgin Mother of Jesus." [1]

A few words might here be interposed or added, as to the relations of Athens and her Church to the wider and more conspicuous "Eastern:" their agreement and differences, in doctrine and jurisdiction. The Eastern Church proper, (at present disregarding the future tripartite division) had assumed to itself, so early as the fourth century, the somewhat pretentious title of "The Holy Orthodox, Catholic and Apostolic." While rejecting the Papal supremacy of Rome it recognised

Temple of Theseus still surviving, in an almost perfect state, while so many of its compeers have been destroyed, is because of its having thus been utilised as a Christian church; and, as such, sacredly preserved in mediæval times. The same reason may have shielded it from the still more ruthless assaults of later ages, which have succeeded in demolishing so many Athenian monuments.

[1] Sir G. T. Bowen's Handbook to Greece.

and recognises the validity of the first seven General Councils. The Greek Church, including that of ancient Hellas, the adjacent countries and islands, and therefore also the hereditary church of our Apostle, came to be separated from the parent stem, in consequence of its rejection of the Patriarchate claimed by Constantinople. When the ancient Byzantium became, under Constantine, not only the new capital of the Roman empire, but the chief seat of Christianity, it was hardly to be wondered at, that her bishops and clergy should arrogate ecclesiastical precedence and pre-eminence. Before the close of the fourth century, a canon was promulgated asserting the dominant claims of 'new Rome.' This assumption was resented by the Western Greek churches: and ere the century ended, a disruption of jurisdiction took place, confirmed and strengthened at the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451); and rendered more pronounced and permanent by the influence and authority of the distinguished Chrysostom. The schism with Rome, it need hardly be said, was more confirmed and inveterate still,—mutual anathema and excommunication followed between the two great rivals, though there ensued occasional and intermittent negotiations for union and reconciliation

which do not concern us here. The twofold procession of the Holy Ghost: the addition of 'filioque' to the creed; the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, the administration of the communion in one or both kinds, formed the 'burning questions' of subsequent times, extending far down the centuries, intensifying the antagonism and deepening the estrangement. One future cause of separation from Rome, shared by the Hellenic churches, is of interest to us in this Volume. Athens — the old lover of images (κατείδωλον πόλις) became, in the eighth century, in common with the affiliated churches of the East, a violent "Iconoclast;" the uncompromising opponent, at least, to one form of art which had conferred on her, in her historic past, no small share of prestige and renown. The churches of Rome and the West came to be crowded with sculptured forms of Prophets and Apostles, Saints and Angels. The old land and home of Phidias and Praxiteles, Polycletus and Polignotus, forbade, with the single exception of the cross, the use of chisel in the decoration of their ecclesiastical buildings. By a strange caprice—"the irony of fate"—pictures and paintings, often too enshrined in costly gems, or replendent in gold and silver caskets, were allowed, and are still allowed, with-

out let or hindrance, to adorn the church walls: but graven images were and are conspicuous by their absence. This startling omission to those enamoured of such accessories, it must be owned is amply compensated, in addition to the pictures just referred to, by the gorgeousness of hierarchal robe and priestly adornment:[1] also in their larger and wealthier churches, the perfection of vocal music. We have spoken of the severance of the Western Greek Church from Constantinople. This perhaps, however, may be affirmed with a qualification: as the former retained a certain dependence on the Eastern Patriarchate till the earlier part of the present century. But her separation and separate jurisdiction was secured at the memorable revolution of 1822. She then became the church of the revived nationality. Her virtual independence of Eastern control was settled ten years after,—while the last relic of that control—in the consecration of the clerical dignitaries, was cancelled in 1868. She now disowns the authority and surveillance alike of Pontiff and Patriarch, her final and authoritative

[1] "Often the altars may blaze with gold;—the dresses of the priests stiffen with the richest silks of Broussa, yet the contrast remains. Art, as such, has no place in the worship or in the edifice. . . . There is no beauty of form or colour beyond what is produced by the mere display of gorgeous and barbaric pomp."—*Eastern Church*, p. 38.

court being "the Holy Synod:" which, though limited in number, is composed of varied orders of clergy from the metropolitan Archbishop downwards.[1]

It may only farther be necessary to say, that not a few abortive attempts, both before and since the Reformation, have been made to unite the two great rival churches of East and West, inclusive, of course, of the churches of Greece. Even Anglican ecclesiastics have not deemed it inconsistent with their Protestant principles and historic character, to attempt, if not fusion—at all events communion, with a church alike defective in doctrine and lax in discipline and practice. These negotiations, however, have as yet failed. The following code, held by the Eastern Churches, can surely scarcely be deemed in harmony with what the fathers and martyrs of our English Reformation have bequeathed in sacred trust. While accepting the Bible as the rule of faith,—they recognise the authority of unwritten tradition. They admit the Seven Sacraments as received by the Church of Rome: the doctrine of transubstantiation and adoration of the host,—auricular confession, priestly absolution, Mariolatry — the

[1] I am indebted for much of the information in this brief statement, to a concise yet comprehensive article in Chambers's Encyclopædia, "Greece."

intercession of the saints — a bigoted credence in the supposed charm of Apostolic succession, celibacy of bishops, prayers for the dead, and the monastic and conventual system far in excess of the kindred Institutions in the West.

"Such," says the late Lord Carnarvon—though his verdict may admit of modification owing to the time which has elapsed since he wrote,— "such as the Greek Church became on the extinction of Paganism, such, or nearly such, she seems to be now. Her missionary work has been narrow, her moral influence and control at home small; and though she has preserved a rigid continuity of doctrinal form, the principle of an ever-expanding and all-absorbing vitality has been wanting. In great cities her prelates have too frequently been the slaves of wealth and power, of courtly intrigue and political faction; in the desert her monks have become dreamy and unpractical anchorites. No lands reclaimed, no centres of agriculture and civilisation created, no literature preserved, no schools founded, no human beings raised to a higher sphere of social action and duty—are to be set down to the account of the Greek Church.[1] She is a frag-

[1] "As a general rule," says Dean Stanley, in accord with the impressions of the earlier traveller as to the preponderance of the contemplative over

ment of old Byzantine civilisation, as rigid and angular as the mosaics that still adorn and seem to frown down from the walls of her churches. . . . There is little reason for wonder that, being such, she should have exercised only a doubtful influence over the passions and feuds of a restless and half-civilised race, and that she should in her temporalities have undergone the final fate of so many other European churches that have been unequal to their duties. Her bishoprics have been reduced, her property largely confiscated, many of her monasteries suppressed; and if the ruin was not more complete, it was probably owing to the strongly national character with which she was impressed, and which, through all her many changes of fortune, she never lost. But though the clergy are poor and unlettered men, even in some cases it is said to the extent of being unable to read, and incapable of impressing the higher truths of spiritual teaching on their flocks, the forms and scruples of religion are strong in the minds of the people. Lights are kept burning in deserted chapels, no peasant but crosses himself when

the active life—"there has arisen in the East no society like the Benedictines, held in honour wherever literature or civilisation has spread: no charitable orders like the Sisters of Mercy, which carry light and peace into the darkest haunts of suffering humanity. Active life is, on the strict Eastern theory, an abuse of the system."—*Eastern Church*, p. 30.

passing a church, and most Greeks observe the stated fasts with a severity unknown to the members of the Latin communion."[1]

The following description, also by Lord Carnarvon, of Easter Eve in the Cathedral at Athens, recalls vividly to the present writer a spectacle there witnessed on the occasion of the funeral of one of the oldest and most distinguished officers of the Greek army. "The dress worn by the common priests was dark and simple. Their long black beards, aquiline features, and severe cast of countenance, accorded well with their sombre habiliments, and set forth the gorgeous attire in which the higher dignitaries were arrayed. The officiating priest was remarkable from his age, his handsome countenance, and his magnificent grey beard. A strange and not unpleasing effect was produced on the mind by the blaze of the innumerable lights, each person holding a taper

[1] Athens and the Morea, pp. 153–155. In confirmation of the aforesaid strictures, I give here the recent unprejudiced testimony of a member of the Roman Catholic Church,—one, who though young in years, was a singular example of all that was rare and beautiful in character alike as a man and a Christian soldier:—"How Protestants can talk of union with the Greeks . . . I cannot tell. And the more so, when I see that if some parts of Catholic Christendom are corrupt, they, in spite of all which is said in their favour, are infinitely more so on the whole. . . . Their religion is really a kind of fetichism, and what is called by Protestants Mariolatry in our church, would have to be called Idolatry pure and simple in theirs. As far as I can make out, it seems a religion of the dead."—*Memoir of Lieutenant De Lisle, R.N.*, 1886.

in his hand as a mark of his adhesion to the faith; by the variety of ecclesiastical and national costume; and by the wild chant which rose around us, and filled the air with its peculiar and plaintive sounds" (pp. 31, 32). On the specific occasion to which as a personal spectator I allude, a brother officer of the deceased, or, it may be, some other high official, delivered from a 'bema' an oration in modern Greek on the virtues and deeds of the departed, confronting a sympathetic crowd each with the symbolic lighted candle.[1]

But the lighted torch or candle has generally, in all lands and in all churches, something in it

[1] The use of these candles at Greek funerals, which to us who were strange to the custom formed the most singular feature in the ceremonial, dates from the beginning of the fourth century. Nothing can be more certain than that for the first 300 years of the Christian era, lights of any kind were strictly forbidden in any part of the ritual of the Church—either in the shape of taper, torch, or candle: and this for the very sufficient reason, that Christians would thereby be conforming to the usages of Pagans, whose practice it was to employ lights in their processions and burn them before the altars of their gods. They are condemned and ridiculed by Tertullian, Lactantius, Gregory Nazianzen, and others, as useless, absurd, and impious. (*See Art.* "*Lights,*" *Smith's Dic. of Bib. Antiquities.*) Among other innovations in the reign of Constantine, the use of lights both in worship and at funerals was sanctioned and encouraged. The same writer just quoted, mentions on the authority of Eusebius, that "when the body of Constantine lay in state, they lighted candles on golden stands around it, and afforded a wonderful spectacle to the beholders, such as was never seen on the earth under the sun since the world was made" (*Vita Constant.* iv. 66). Even when the remains of the great Chrysostom himself were borne from where he died to Constantinople, "the assemblage of the faithful covered the mouth of the Bosphorus with their lamps" (*Theodoret*). At the funeral of the Emperor Justinian "a thousand stands of gold and silver with candles on them, filled the halls." Other examples are given in the same exhaustive article, p. 996.

higher and better than symbol. *Lux lucet in tenebris.* If in the Church proper of Greece, there has been and still may be, deficiency of zeal, or of loyalty to sound doctrine, other faithful representative Christian teachers have done what they could, and with success, to supply what was lacking. The City with which in these pages we are concerned has not been suffered to remain beyond the pale of religious influences. The Great Apostle has true 'Apostolic successors,' though it may be subsidised, still at work. While we gaze on that starred and battered Parthenon of our frontispiece, and mournfully muse with the Poet who loved so well the country of which he sang:—

> "'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more:
> So coldly sweet, so deadly fair.
> We start, for SOUL is wanting there.
> . . . . .
> Clime of the unforgotten brave,
> Whose land from shore to mountain cave
> Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave,
> Shrine of the mighty, can it be
> That this is all remains of thee?"

"Yet"—in language we abbreviate of an eloquent witness, "there is too a light now falling softly upon prostrate Athens. Under the shadow of the Acropolis, missionaries of the Cross tell the

children of those who wandered through the groves of the Academy, or lingered around the Teacher of the Porch, that the 'Just Man' of Plato hath come:—the Master whom Socrates promised to the young Alcibiades, as the guide in the path of prayer which leads to heaven. . . . The youthful Athenians recite the words of Jesus in the sonorous accents of Demosthenes and Lysias, or chant their Christian hymns in the liquid measures of Alcæus and Pindar."[1] Nor in the more ambiguous and qualified verdict of the present, must we forget the large debt of the past in its wider signification.—"The learning of the Greek Church," says its best recent historian, "which even down to the eleventh century excelled that of the Latin, in the fifteenth century contributed more than any single cause to the revival of letters and the German Reformation.[2]

As our Volume was commenced with a somewhat extended reference to Athens in her proud historical pre-eminence; so may this Epilogue be appropriately concluded by reverting to what we owe her, to this hour, intellectually and æsthetically;—in art and arms—poetry and eloquence.

[1] Dr. Bethune's Orations, "Age of Pericles," p. 122.
[2] Eastern Church, p. 18.

What has been said of Greece by Canon Kingsley, may specially be affirmed of her famous capital. Though written for children and youth, his tribute of acknowledgment is equally adapted for older readers: "Strangely have these old Greeks left their mark behind them upon this modern world in which we now live. . . . We owe to them the beginnings of all our mathematics and geometry, . . . the science and knowledge of numbers, and of the shapes of things, and of the forces which make things move and stand at rest; and the beginnings of our geography and astronomy; and of our laws, and freedom, and politics—the science of how to rule a country, and make it peaceful and strong. And we owe them too the beginnings of our logic—the study of words and of reasoning; and of our metaphysics—the study of our own thoughts and souls. And last of all, they made their own language so beautiful, that foreigners used to take to it instead of their own; and at last Greek became the common language of educated people all over the old world, from Persia and Egypt even to Spain and Britain. And therefore it was that the New Testament was written in Greek that it might be read and understood by all the nations of the Roman Empire."[1]

[1] The Heroes, pp. 8, 9.

To the same effect, we may add the words of one, whose refinement and scholarship, as the preceding pages are sufficient to testify—have thrown a reflected lustre on the glories of the city of Pericles, past and present:—"Nor at Athens alone are we to look for Athens. From the gates of its Acropolis, as from a mother city, issued intellectual colonies into every region of the world. These buildings, ruined as they are at present, have served for two thousand years as models for the most admired fabrics in every civilised country of the world. Having perished here, they survive there. . . . Thus the genius which conceived and executed these noble works is immortal and prolific, while the materials on which it laboured are crumbling to decay."[1]

The marked influence of the ancient Art of Athens (just spoken of) in all subsequent ages, leads, in a few closing references, to that influence as exerted on our own country and time, and which we venture to hope, even from Apostolic lips, would meet with indulgent approval. Let us be thankful that, amid its shortcomings and sometimes debasements, the better light of this nineteenth century has, at least in the hands of the noblest and safest Interpreters of truth, done its

[1] Wordsworth's Greece, p. 188.

best to rescue art from its perversions, and to assert its true God-given mission as the handmaid of all that is lofty and pure, true and good. France may still be left to wallow in her impurities. Her Salon may throw open its gates to unworthy appeals to sensuousness, and much from which native delicacy as well as Christian taste and refinement recoils. But English Art, with few exceptions, has raised the ethical and religious standard. With many it has been recognised and reverenced as a moral and spiritual Teacher. It has revived and recalled the aspirations of the Painters and Sculptors of the Middle Ages and the *Renaissance*. For whatever may be our ecclesiastical schools or dogmas, those would be narrow-minded indeed, who did not recognise in the great artists of Florence and Bologna, Padua, Venice and Rome another 'Apostolic Succession,'—men who, with lofty aim and many of them of devout souls, proclaimed the Gospel alike in its spiritual and moral aspects, by means of these "illuminated missals"—to the multitudes, alike rich and poor. Not the world only, but Christianity would have been at this moment far poorer but for the names of Titian and Tintoret, Fra-Angelico and Perugino, Leonardo, Andrea del Sarto, Raphael and Michael Angelo. Greece and Athens never preached to

Pagan devotees as did these Masters of their holy craft. The Greek in his essentially Pagan ideals —his anthropomorphism, had limited conceptions of the divine, compared to men imbued in their inmost hearts with the supernatural. Hear the author of "Modern Painters" in one of his most eloquent passages, dilating on this necessary shortcoming and inferiority of Hellenic, as compared with Christian art. His views, if we remember right, are somewhat qualified in subsequent writings; but as regards the advantages which the Christian artist enjoyed over the Grecian in the loftier models of a purer and diviner faith, his earlier verdict and impressions remain. He takes one of those Painters just named—Perugino—and thus speaks of his power of rendering, compared with those destitute of religious faith and sentiment:—"The Greek could not conceive a spirit; he could do nothing without limbs; his god is a finite god, talking, pursuing, and going journeys; if at any time he was touched with a true feeling of the unseen powers around him, it was in the field of poised battle; for there is something in the near coming of the shadow of death, something in the devoted fulfilment of mortal duty, that reveals the real god, though darkly. . . . Yet what were the Greek's thoughts of his God

of Battle? No spirit-power was in the vision; it was a being of clay strength and human passion, foul, fierce, and changeful; of penetrable arms and vulnerable flesh. Gather what we may of great, from Pagan chisel or Pagan dream, and set it beside the orderer of Christian warfare, Michael the Archangel, Perugino's. God has put His power upon him. Resistless radiance is on his limbs; no lines are there of earthly strength; no trace on the divine features of earthly anger; trustful and thoughtful, fearless but full of love, incapable except of the repose of eternal conquest . . . the dust of principalities and powers beneath his feet, the murmur of hell against him heard by his spiritual ear, like the winding of a shell on the far off sea-shore."[1]

Such is the mission of true Christian art—in its affinity with divine revelation and its heavenly visions;—with Christianity's '*Sursum corda*' as the Painter's motto and watchword;—if, with reverence we may use the words—"baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire." And why should we scruple to use the sacred text, when we can travel back in thought (as we have already had occasion to note in the first Chapter of this Volume) to art's earliest consecration in the Sinai

[1] Modern Painters, vol. ii. pp. 213, 214.

wilderness? The assertion in that narrative leaves us in no doubt that the craftsmen there named were as much inspired in their appointed vocation, as any priest or prophet of the same or subsequent ages. All honour to those, in modern times, on whom this prophetic or apostolic art-spirit has fallen. We recognise the inspired religious poet; why leave unrecognised the inspired religious artist?—all the more, where a profound personal faith is linked with a recognised mission. Take our best living representative of religious painters —one whose name and works are as familiar to England as those of Parrhasius and Apelles were to Attica and Athens:—"I am satisfied that the Father of all has not left us . . . only to disappear in the black abyss. What an impotent conclusion! For me, this would be aimless mockery! The inheritance that the Greatest of the sons of God has won for us has its welcome in my soul. I want now to carry out my purpose of travel in Palestine, to prove, so far as my painting can, that Christianity is a living faith; that the fullest realisation of its wondrous story cannot unspiritualise it. . . . I am not afraid of the full truth, and I wish to help in propagating it."[1]

[1] Mr. Holman Hunt. Art.: "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." *Contemporary Review*, June 1886.

These are noble words, and they indicate possibilities in Christian art, to which, owing to his cramped and degraded polytheism, it was impossible for the Greek to aspire. Noble words! for they assert the highest vocation of art, that of being employed—dignified and transfigured—for the glory of God; to illustrate and enforce the loftiest of evangelic facts and teaching—vindicating the Fatherhood of the Supreme, and doing homage and reverence to this "Great Son"—the Prince of life and Lord of Glory.

Would St. Paul, I repeat, if he had lived in this England of ours in the nineteenth century, and away from the debasing influences of a sensuous mythology reflected in a sensuous life, not have endorsed such sentiments? To much indeed of the modern renaissance in ecclesiastical architecture, also to frequent extravagances and caricatures—unhappy departures from 'the beauties of holiness'—he might, not without cause, have been tempted to apply in one of its numerous meanings his old Athenian phrase—*Κατείδωλον*. But, to whatever "in art and man's device" is pure and loving and of good report—auxiliaries to faith and devotion, supplanting and superseding the distortions and deformities of other and cruder days—would he

not willingly have surrendered, even, if need be, his own partialities for a simpler cult and rubric,—and become "all things to all men, if by any means he might gain some"?

THE END.

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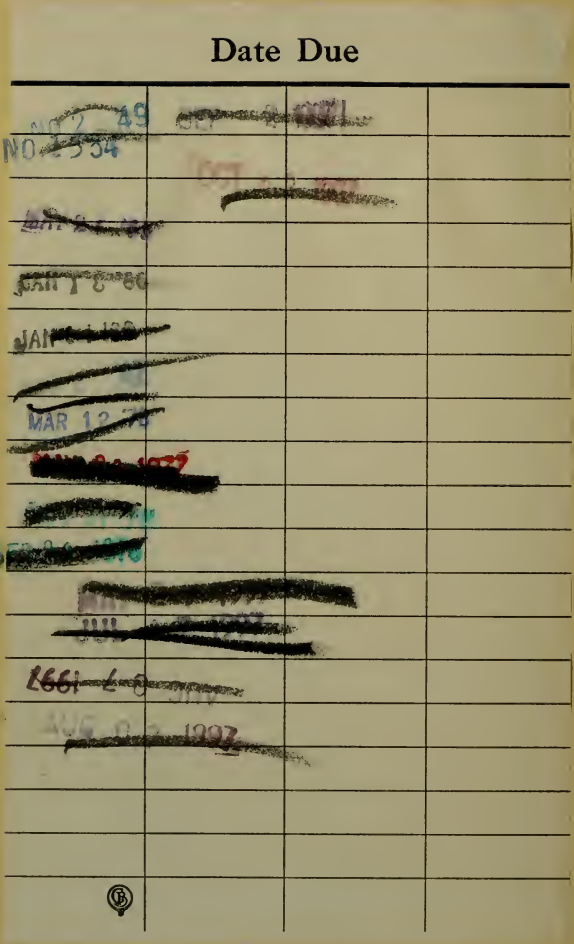
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